NICCOS

15

Nijmegen Studies in Development and Cultural Change

P.W. Stunnenberg

Entitled to Land

The Incorporation of the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco and the Spatial Marginalization of the Indian People

Verlag **breitenbach** Publishers
Saarbrücken - Fort Lauderdale

Entitled to Land

The Incorporation of the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco and the Spatial Marginalization of the Indian People

EEN WETENSCHAPPELIJKE PROEVE OP HET GEBIED VAN DE BELEIDSWETENSCHAPPEN

PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen,
volgens besluit van het College van Decanen
in het openbaar te verdedigen
op dinsdag 7 september 1993
des namiddags te 3.30 uur precies

door

Petrus Walterus Stunnenberg

geboren op 9 april 1963
te Nijmegen

Promotor: Prof. Dr. J.M.G. Kleinpenning

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book was written over a period of four years with the Department of Human Geography of Developing Countries, Faculty of Policy Sciences, Catholic University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. The study is based on two periods of fieldwork among the Indian people of the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco, carried out from 1990 to 1992. The study is far from complete since a considerably longer period of time would have to be spent in the field in order to fully comprehend the complex developments that currently take place in the Chaco region. It does, however, sketch the main topics related to the troublesome access to land that presently seems to strike all Indian people in the region. In the book, names of people have been omitted where possible in order to respect the privacy of respondents and informants.

I am grateful to all people who in one way or another contributed to the realization of this book. I would particularly like to thank Dr. Henk Hack for his involvement with my work and the interesting correspondence we have had over the past few years. I would also like to express my thanks to Luis de la Cruz, Wayne Robins and Dr. Wilmar Stahl who offered useful advice and support during my fieldwork and commented on parts of the manuscript. I am grateful also to Andrew Cole, Herman Kok and Hananja Olthuis for revising my English texts. Acknowledgement is also to made of the educative advice of Frans van Buul who patiently explained the workings of the computer to me. To Prof. Dr. Jan Kleinpenning I express my sincere gratitude for the way he encouraged and supervised my work. I have enjoyed working at his Department of Human Geography of Developing Countries. To my wife Cécile, who accompanied me on the trips through the Chaco and with whom I shared long evenings of interesting discussions, I can only say that I would not have enjoyed the fieldwork without her. Last but not least is my debt to the Indian people in Loma Pytá, Colonia Aborigen, Pluma de Pato, Colonia Armonía, Barrio Nam Qom and Puerto Diana who always gave us a friendly welcome and co-operated constructively with the study.

Peter Stunnenberg
Nijmegen, April 1993

CONTENTS

List of maps

List of figures

List of tables

INTRODUCTION

"Esta tierra es de nadie, o sea que, es de nuestros antepasados..., los Indígenas de esta región. Pero los blancos dicen que ellos la compraron, esta tierra. Dicen que ahora es de ellos..."

These words, spoken by a Nivaklé Indian in Loma Pytá touch upon the kernel of this study. The purpose of this book is to study the changes that have occurred in the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco since 1875 and the manner in which these changes affected and still affect the way of life of the indigenous people in this area. Since the study was carried out and written mainly from a geographical point of view, the continuous thread that runs through the book will be the changes in the spatial structure of the Gran Chaco and the problems that currently face the Indian people in their struggle for land.

Since 1492, when the first European set foot on the Latin American continent, the rights and integrity of the indigenous population have been violated. Indians have been killed during raids, taken into custody or deprived of their land and resources. Today, the decimated indigenous population of Latin America that has survived five centuries of exploitation and suppression is still fighting for its land and a dignified position in society.

This story may seem old and grey and well-documented in scientific publications, but is nevertheless the subject of this study. Why write another study on the subject?

First of all, although many studies have been carried out among the Indian people of Latin America, many details, especially those that relate to the current life situation and problems of these people, are still insufficiently analyzed. In my view, the problems of the Indian people in Latin America should not be regarded as historical issues, but should be studied as present-day sociological, juridical, anthropological and geographical problems that are waiting for appropriate explanations, and if possible, recommendations and solutions. If there are opportunities, and I believe there are, for a future indigenist policy that can really contribute to an improvement of the living conditions of the Latin

American Indians, it is important to have an up to date picture of the situation.

Next to this, there is a striking gap in literature about the Gran Chaco as a geographical region as well as about its native inhabitants. The culture and history of the Indian people in Central America and the Andean countries have often been the issue of study, but as far as the Gran Chaco is concerned, few scientists seem to have been attracted by this region. Those studies that have been written about the Gran Chaco, often focused on a sole part of the region and discussed only the Paraguayan, the Argentinean or the Bolivian part. I considered it useful to make a study of both the Paraguayan and the Argentine part of the region which would facilitate me to make a comparison between these two countries insofar as it involves the Gran Chaco.

The study was conducted in the light of the following question: "What have been the consequences of the spatial, social and economic incorporation of the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco for the situation of the Indian users of land, and what have been the reactions of governments, NGOs and the Indians themselves on the process of their increasing spatial marginalization?". In order to reduce this rather complex question into manageable proportions, it was decided to unfold the questions into the following three sub-questions:

1. How did the process of spatial, social and economic incorporation develop in the Gran Chaco since 1875 and what actors were (and are) involved in this process?
2. What major changes have come about in the Indian economic way of life as a result of the process of incorporation?
3. What initiatives have been taken to avoid the further spatial marginalization of the Indian people by the Argentine and Paraguayan governments, by non-governmental organizations and by the Indians themselves, and what are the positive and negative effects of these initiatives?

The study can be characterized as descriptive and analytical. On the basis of secondary sources as well as of primary data collected during two periods of fieldwork from 1990 to 1992, an overview will be given of the problems that currently confront the Indian people of the Gran Chaco.

Given the descriptive, and to a certain extent explorative character of the study, I have tried to avoid extensive theoretical treatises which

would result in *a priori* defined fields of interest and distract attention from the study of practical events and problems. This book has been written with the intention of contributing to a better understanding of the complex situation in the Gran Chaco rather than approach the subjects raised in the book from a theoretical point of view. In other words, attention is focused on particularities rather than on abstractions and generalities.

Not all theoretical treatises have been left out, however, since it was necessary to elaborate on a number of concepts that play a crucial role in the study. While reading chapter two and three, the reader will come across elaborations of the concepts of incorporation, colonization, hunter and gatherer cultures and spatial marginalization. The reader should bear in mind that these treatises do not intend to draw conclusions on a theoretical level, but serve to build a framework to be used in the following descriptions and analyses.

The study focuses on the present-day problems relating to Indian access to land in the Gran Chaco, but, as has often been said, we cannot understand the present if we have not thoroughly studied the past. Therefore, the book starts with two chapters of historical analysis. In these chapters an overview will be given of the processes of incorporation and colonization that have resulted in drastic changes in the livelihood of the Indian people. Economic aspects, as for instance the growth of livestock production and forest exploitation will be stressed as well as the role of missionaries and military forces that have had far-reaching consequences for the region and its native inhabitants. The second chapter concludes with some observations with respect to land use and population growth.

The third chapter is of a more general character and in its first section starts with an overall picture of hunting and gathering societies all over the world. Also, various forms of government policy with respect to these people, in this book referred to as "indigenist policy", will be mentioned briefly. Present-day indigenist legislation of Argentina and Paraguay is the subject of the second section, while section three deals with the analytical concept of "spatial marginalization", which paves the way for a more practical perspective in the study. The analytical framework developed in this section serves as a guideline in the chapters that follow.

The chapters four to nine are devoted to six case studies of Indian communities in the Gran Chaco. In order to fully comprehend the

problems that face the Indians in their struggle for land, and the diversity of situations in this respect, six Indian communities were selected that all find themselves in a specific situation when it comes to land tenure.

The first case study deals with the Nivaklé Indians of Loma Pytá in the Paraguayan Chaco who until recently lived on land which was the property of a private landowner. The Wichí of Pluma de Pato occupy a piece of land that belongs to the provincial authorities of the Argentine province of Salta that has, as described in chapter five, other plans with this land. The Toba and Mocoví of Colonia Aborigen, Argentine province of Chaco, helped me to compose the sixth chapter which is supposed to represent those Indian communities that live in areas which have been given the status of *Reservas Indígenas*. The fourth group of Indian communities comprises those who have been given the opportunity to reside on land which has been purchased for them by religious and other non-governmental organizations. The Lengua in Colonia Armonía provide us with a clear picture of the pros and cons of this specific tenure situation. Chapter eight focuses on Indian communities that have managed to obtain land in legal ownership which they decided to parcel out among their members. All Indian families in Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda, province of Formosa, possess individual land titles. Finally, the Chamacoco community of Puerto Diana in the northern part of the Paraguayan Chaco serves as an example of those Indian communities that have been able to obtain land in collective ownership. The community as a whole has been recognized in 1987 as the legal owner of 2,345 hectares of land.

In chapter ten, the final chapter of this book, an attempt is made to summarize the main themes of the study. The central issue raised is the Indians' position as users of land in the Gran Chaco and the obstacles that confront them in the struggle to obtain the property rights of sufficient and suitable land. The chapter also provides a brief outlook into the future and concludes with an outline of three major principles of constructive and responsible indigenist policy.

1. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GRAN CHACO UP TO 1875

1.1 The natural environment of the Gran Chaco

The desolate, vast Gran Chaco is situated in the interior of South America. The name Chaco, was given to this area by the *Quechua* speaking Indians many centuries ago and in their language means "hunting territory".

Geographically speaking, the Gran Chaco stretches from 19 to 29 degrees southern latitude, and from 58 to 64 degrees eastern longitude. The total area amounts to 800,000 square kilometres of which nowadays some 400,000 sq. km. belongs to Argentina, 250,000 sq. km. is Paraguayan territory while 150,000 sq. km. is situated within Bolivian borders (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, pp. 412-3).

On the western-side, the lowlands of the Gran Chaco are bordered by the slopes of the Andean mountain range. To the south, the area is bounded by an elevation of the landscape caused by the hills of Córdoba and the Pampa. On the eastern-side, we find the Paraná and Paraguay rivers and in the north the environment changes rapidly as a consequence of the Brazilian massif (see map 1.1).

When we consider the Gran Chaco from a governmental point of view, we notice that the area is divided into several departments and provinces. In Paraguay, the Gran Chaco is divided into five departments; Presidente Hayes, Alto Paraguay, Nueva Asunción, Chaco and Boquerón. In Argentina, the provinces Formosa and Chaco are fully situated in the area, the eastern part of Salta is in the Gran Chaco and Santiago del Estero and Santa Fé have their northern regions within the Gran Chaco territory.[1]

An alternative way of characterizing the region is to divide it into *Chaco Austral*, the most southern part between the Pampa and the Bermejo river, the *Chaco Central*, the area between the two important rivers Bermejo and Pilcomayo, and finally, the *Chaco Boreal* which is

[1] In this study attention is focused on the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco, consequently, the Bolivian situation will be mentioned explicitly when relevant.

the region north of the Pilcomayo river and therefore the whole part of the Gran Chaco which is located in Paraguay and Bolivia (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 413).

The Gran Chaco plain slopes gently from east to west. On the banks of the Paraguay and Paraná rivers, the surface is about 100 metres above sea level, while at the west side near the Andean range, elevation varies between 300 and 400 metres. This unevenness is partly caused by the big Andean rivers that in the past used to flood the entire Gran Chaco area several times a year. In fact, the soil of the Gran Chaco consists totally of river sediments. Clay, like we find in the Pampa and which is typically alluvial material, is extended over the area. Salt is also richly present in the Gran Chaco soil, in contrast to stones and shingles which are completely absent (James, 1942, pp. 308-9; Kempski, 1931, p. 9).

The climate of the Gran Chaco can be classified as continental; winters are relatively cold and summers extremely hot. The highest temperature of South America has been recorded in the Gran Chaco; forty-seven degrees Celsius in the shade (Palmer, 1977, p. 2). In winter, from June to August, the wind blows cold from the south and night temperatures may drop below freezing. Yet day temperatures in winter may rise to an average of more than twenty degrees. In summer, the wind blows from the north and is often very hot and dry. Both in summer and in winter, daily temperatures may fluctuate more than twenty degrees.

Precipitation decreases from east to west. Near the banks of the Paraguay and Paraná rivers, rainfall amounts to 1300 to 1400 millimetres annually, and from there decreases some 100 millimetres with every 100 kilometres, resulting in a rainfall of about 500 millimetres in the western parts of the Gran Chaco (Altamirano et al., 1987, p. 10; Russo, 1983, p. 29). The major part of the precipitation falls during the summer months November to March (in the south, rainfall starts and finishes somewhat earlier than in the north), leaving winters as periods of almost total drought. The more westerly situated, the longer this period of drought. Measurements in Las Brenas, located some 200 kilometres to the west of Resistencia, show an average of four rain-free months while Santiago del Estero (a further 350 kilometres to the west) shows an average of six dry months (Bünstorf, 1976, p. 152). The fact that rainfall is concentrated in the hot summer months, leads to considerable evapotranspiration so that only a minor part of the precipitation is actually absorbed by the soil. Precipitation in the Gran

Chaco is characterized by variability, not only between summer and winter, but also from year to year; exceptionally dry years are interspersed with relatively wet years.

Of the many rivers which originate in the Andes and flow in the Gran Chaco, only three reach the Paraguay and Paraná rivers, all the others dry out somewhere on their route to the east. The most important river is the Pilcomayo which nowadays constitutes the border between Paraguay and Argentina. During the rainy season, the Pilcomayo often floods, while in winter the river dries to a small stream. The lower course of the river is very flat and forms a region of swamps and lagoons in the so-called *Chaco Bajo*. The Bermejo is less stable than the Pilcomayo, changing its course from time to time, meandering, splitting its stream into pieces and forming new beds. The third important river is the Salado. After passing along Santiago del Estero, the river spreads into several tributaries and finally reaches the Paraná at Santa Fé.

The rivers in the Gran Chaco are not, or at best only partially, navigable. The strong variability of the waterlevels causes them to flood from time to time, and induces an ongoing meandering of the riverbeds. Moreover, the rivers carry all sorts of debris like stones and wood that could endanger the shipping. At places, on the banks of the major rivers, we come across saw-mills that take advantage of this cheap supply of wood.

As early as 1942, James (1942, p. 309) pointed out that the regular flooding and the instability of the rivers would frustrate future development alongside the streams. On the other hand, he added, the annual floodings of the rivers irrigate large tracks of potential cropland which are often referred to as *bañados*.

The Pilcomayo, the Salado and the Bermejo river along with several others which dry out in the Gran Chaco region, are highly important as watersources, especially in the western parts where rainfall is lacking more often than not. Unfortunately, the quality of the water is often poor because of high salt levels due to the high degree of evaporation (Palmer, 1977, p. 2).

The groundwater level is low and instable, the further to the west, the deeper it is to be found. In places, one has to drill several hundred metres to reach it. Salification again is a problem, especially in the lower areas. In some places the groundwater is totally unsuited for consumption. In the south-western part, near Santiago del Estero, so-called *salinas*, salt lakes, have arisen.

Originally, about one-third of the Gran Chaco area was covered by

Map 1.1 Division of the Gran Chaco into provinces (Argentina) and departments (Paraguay)

forest which was mainly located in the eastern part of the region. Today, however, the area of woodland has decreased as a result of human activity. Some species of trees are rather rare and therefore valuable like the *quebracho colorado*, the *algarroba*, the *guayacán*, the *palo santo* and the *lapacho* (Hueck, 1966, p. 243; Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 414). Other areas, which are best characterized as savannas, are dominated by grass plains and palm trees. In the western region, the landscape is dominated by the so-called *montes* in which trees are rather scarce and vegetation is limited to all sorts of cacti, shrubs and bramble bushes (Kempski, 1931, p. 9).

In chapter two, I will discuss in detail how the occupation of this "inhospitable area" began at the end of the last century. First, however, I will go back further into history to see what occurred in the Gran Chaco long before western influences made their entrance.

1.2 The pre-colonial period

American history goes back some fifteen millennia to the time when inhabitants of north and east Asia crossed the Bering Strait and set foot on the North American continent. Some groups of these Mongolian wanderers headed towards the south and eventually settled down in different parts of Latin America. There, these people formed the basic structure of the population of the, until then uninhabited continent (Klassen, 1991, p. 12; Prien, 1978, pp. 34-5).

In course of time, a multitude of different Indian groups and tribes, all with their specific cultures and languages, evolved from these first dwellers. Complex cultures based on a strong internal structure and an advanced agrarian economic system like the Incas in present-day Peru and the Aztecs and the Mayas in present-day Mexico and Guatemala, emerged alongside cultures of less advanced peoples like the Indians of the lowlands and the Amazon Basin.

During the pre-columbian era, large population migrations took place. In the southern cone of Latin America, three migratory movements are of relevance for the later population developments in the Gran Chaco (Métraux, 1946, p. 210; Radin, 1942, p. 168; Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 97). First, there were the Arawacan, who moved from the south of Chili to Patagonia and the eastern slopes of the Andes. The Chané, one of the Arawacan tribes, today still resides in the western

part of the Gran Chaco (Klassen, 1991, p. 17). Another migratory movement of great importance is the penetration of the Tupi-Guaraní into the subtropical jungle of eastern Paraguay and north-eastern Argentina. The Tupi-Guaraní originally came from the Amazon and in later years occupied the area bounded by the eastern parts of the Gran Chaco. Finally, the Incas conquered parts of north-west Argentina and from then the Inca empire stretched out to the slopes of the Andes where the lowlands begin.

For Radin (1942, p. 167), it is clear that the Indian tribes of the Gran Chaco did not choose this inhospitable area as a place of settlement out of free choice. Pressures and threats from different directions forced them into the region. Especially the contact with the more complex and skilled Arawacan cultures in the west and south, and later on with the Tupi-Guaraní in the east, left the Gran Chaco tribes no other option than to make the best of it at this poor and harsh environment. In fact, the Gran Chaco Indians are refugees who escaped the inter-tribal conflicts that took place at the boundaries of the lowlands where they originally lived. They settled down in the practically unoccupied area, in general choosing sites where at least some drinking water was available. Population concentrated on the banks of the rivers and some groups started cultivating the fertile *bañados*.

Likewise, Métraux (1946, p. 210) points out the fact that the Andean Indians as well as the Guaraní were numerous and warlike, and that among the Gran Chaco tribes we find many cultural influences from both these civilizations. For example, patterns in the Chaco textiles and pottery as well as some agricultural customs seem to refer to the contact with Andean people. The role of the Arawacan in the dispersion of these Andean influences may have been considerable. Shamanistic practices, the use of some specific tools, basket weaving and maybe also the cultivation of sweet manioc are the result of contact with the Guaraní Indians.

The Indian population of the Gran Chaco came to depend almost exclusively on hunting, fishing and gathering. The Gran Chaco bush has a great variety of trees, animals and plants which can be exploited by man for use and consumption.

Fruits like *tusca*, *chañar* and *mistol* are widely spread, just as the *algarroba* tree which forms the main element of the *algarroba*-beer. The hearts of palm trees can be exploited, wild manioc is sometimes available, just as many other edible things that were known and gathered

by the Indians. Fishing was strongly seasonal; in the months of April, May and parts of June, many groups moved to the rivers to obtain a substantial part of their daily diet from the water. Hunting formed an important contribution to the subsistence economy of all Gran Chaco tribes, especially those that had restricted access to the rivers for fishing. Game consisted of deer, peccaries, birds, armadillos, crocodiles and ostriches. The catch was seldom abundant but frequently sufficient (Métraux, 1946, pp. 246-61).

Game, fruits and fish were often shared among the families of the Indian community. In fact, all sorts of material goods could not be classified in terms of private property of one of the members, but were communally owned. Everyone had access to the limited, collective resources. The sharing of economic goods in a more or less structural way, is often referred to as "reciprocity".

Land in this respect, was an exception in the sense that it was not considered property that could be owned either by a community or an individual. Land was closely linked to the dwelling places of spirits and the deceased. Consequently, it was not regarded as a commodity and could not be possessed or traded in any material sense. Geographical locations played a crucial role in the religion and cosmology of many tribal people in the Gran Chaco (see e.g. Chase-Sardi, 1987; Susnik, 1981; Wright, 1987).

Because of the fact that the Indian people in the Gran Chaco at that time largely depended on the exploitation of natural resources like deer, birds, fish and fruits, the communities were forced to move from time to time. Semi-nomadism, therefore was a condition to safeguard the survival of the group. Especially in the drier parts of the Gran Chaco, consumable resources could be rather scarce and exhausted after a certain period of exploitation by the Indians. By way of temporal migration to other locations in the area, the Indian communities enabled the exploited regions to recover.

In spite of the fact that the majority of the Indian people in the Gran Chaco in essence should be classified as "semi-nomadic", arable farming to a certain extent was known to nearly all the tribes. On a small scale, maize, beans, watermelons and sweet potatoes were cultivated but only with limited success (Métraux, 1946, p. 250). Temporal migration of the group, leaving behind the gardens and crops, was common practice since environmental circumstances were not favourable for permanent settlement. Domestic animals like goats, sheep, chickens and pigs, as a contribution to the food supply, only made their

appearance in Indian communities at the end of the 17th century when contact with the Hispanic conquerors had been made.

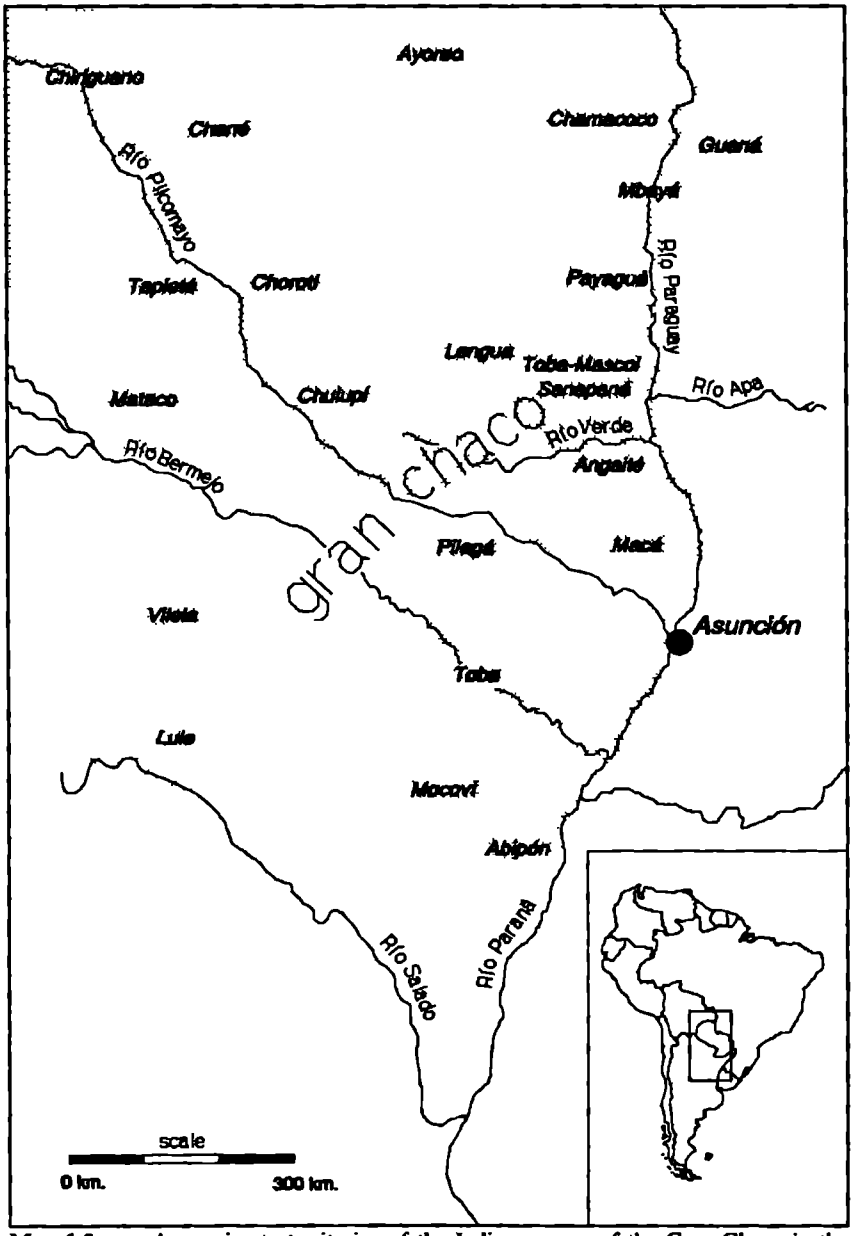
Table 1.1 Ethnic classification of the Gran Chaco Indians in the 16th century [2]

Linguistic group	Ethnic group	Alternative names (or subgroups)
Guaycurú	Abipón	
	Mbayá	Caduveo
	Mocoví	
	Payaguá	Cadigué (north), Sarigué (south)
	Pilagá	
	Toba	Qom, Cocolut, Aquilot
Mascoi	Angaité	Chanethmá
	Lengua	Enthlit
	Sanapaná	Sapukai
	Toba-Mascoi	
Lule Vilela	Lule	Tonocoté
	Vilela	
Mataco	Chorotí	Manjuy, Yofuaja
	Chulupí	Nivaklé, Ashluslay
	Macá	
	Mataco	Wichí, Agoyá, Tayní, Teuta
Tupi-Guaraní	Tapieté	Guaraní-Ñandeva, Chiriguano
Arawacan	Chaná	
	Guaná	Layana
Zamuco	Ayoreo	Moro
	Chamacoco	Ishir

(Altamirano et al., 1987; Klassen, 1991; Métraux, 1946; Susnik, 1981)

The Gran Chaco Indians at that time were (and probably today in a way still are) a very spiritually orientated people. Their traditional religion can be classified as "animistic" and was characterized by the belief in

[2] Some groups have been left out of the table because they have never been linguistically classified. The background of these groups, and sometimes even their existence, is uncertain.



Map 1.2 Approximate territories of the Indian groups of the Gran Chaco in the 16th century (Altamirano et al., 1987; Métraux, 1946; Randle, 1981)

spirits and demons which could manifest themselves in all kinds of forms and which dominated the well- and ill-being of the Indians. Ancestors also played a very important role because of their relation with higher entities, as so did dreams which were considered to reveal the fate and intentions of the dreamer. "Shamans" were intermediaries between the Indian community and the spiritual world and in this manner could manipulate spirits and demons or warn the community of coming threats and misfortune. Medical assistance and some aspects of leadership were often also part of the shamans' task.

The above text sketches briefly some features of the Indian population that the Spaniards came across in the Gran Chaco when they first set foot on the Latin American continent at the beginning of the 16th century. Other aspects of the traditional and modern Gran Chaco cultures will be discussed at later stages when I deal with the different dimensions of the cultural contact and modern developments.

Table 1.1 above illustrates which Indian groups and subgroups populated the Gran Chaco in the 16th century when Spanish and Portuguese explorers set foot on the continent for the first time. Linguistic distinctions form the basic principle of this classification. Map 1.2 represents the approximate territories of these groups.

1.3 The colonial period and the Gran Chaco

In 1516 the Spanish sailor Juan Diaz de Solís discovered the Río de La Plata delta at the east coast of the South American continent (v. Balen, 1937, p. 9; Mandrini, 1983, p. 10). Spanish attempts to colonize this area resulted in one of the greatest disappointments of the Conquest. The first efforts to found a military station at the site of present-day Buenos Aires, led to nothing but starvation and conflicts with the hostile Indian population of this La Plata region. Furthermore, the large quantities of gold and silver, of which the Spaniards had heard and dreamt of so much, were nowhere to be found. The Río de La Plata land, which means in Spanish the silver-river land, proved to be nothing but a desolate region without valuable metals and with an unfriendly climate and population.[3] Eventually, it lasted till 1580 for Buenos Aires to

[3] "Argentina", which literally means "silver", today still refers to this former expectation of the Spaniards to find valuable metals here.

become a permanent Spanish settlement.

Because the Spanish attempts to settle in the estuary largely failed, several expeditions went upstreams to explore the Paraná and the Paraguay. In 1527, Sebastián Gaboto went up the Paraná. He came as far as present-day Resistencia from where he had to return due to navigation problems. In 1529, however, he made another attempt during which he "discovered" the mouth of the Bermejo and the site of the later Asunción (Altamirano et al., 1987, p. 27; Palmer 1977, p. 6). There he met a hostile group of Chaco Indians and Gaboto and his men were forced to return.

On their way back, they ran into the expedition of Diego García de Moguer, and the explorers decided to go upstream together. They reached the mouth of the Paraguay and travelled up it. In 1530, Payaguá Indians raided their camps and killed part of the crew, and they were forced to return (Altamirano et al., 1987, pp. 28-9; Mandrini, 1983, p. 11).

These explorers, however, were not the first Europeans who entered the Chaco. In 1521, Alejo García had travelled from the island Santa Catalina to the Paraguay river from where he went north and into the interior of the Chaco. It seems that he reached the Andes where he and his companions fought with some Indian groups from whom they captured gold and silver. On their way back, they ran into the Payaguá Indians and they were all killed (Altamirano et al., 1987, p. 27).

Finally in 1537, the military outpost Asunción was founded on the bank of the Paraguay river (Regehr, 1979, pp. 85-6; Silva and de la Cruz, 1991, p. 14). At that time, most of the area east of the river was the territory of the Guaraní Indians. Therefore, as soon as the Spaniards set foot on their new land, they encountered the Guaraní people. The Guaraní at that time were subsistence farmers who also hunted and gathered what was offered by the subtropical forest of Eastern Paraguay. In comparison with the Indian peoples of the Gran Chaco, the Guaraní were much more sedentary although from time to time they also moved from one place to another in their vast territory. The Guaraní communities were more or less independent and autonomous, but against other Indian groups and intruders, like the Gran Chaco Indians for example, they joined forces in defence. Relations between the Guaraní and the Gran Chaco tribes were hostile and occasionally violent conflicts took place (Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 56).

The Spaniards who settled in the vicinity of the military fortress Asunción soon developed a peaceful relationship with the Guaraní

Indians. The fact that both the Spaniards and the Guaraní were at war with the Chaco tribes, made them allies in conflict. The peaceful relationship also led to inter-ethnic marriages between Spanish soldiers and colonists and Guaraní women, and soon a sort of alliance between the Spaniards and the Guaraní arose (Pendle, 1954, p. 8). In later years, these close contacts would form the basis for the more or less homogeneous *Mestizo* population that we still find in modern Paraguay (Russo, 1983, pp. 205-6).

As soon as the military fortress Asunción started acting as an exit and provisioning port, new efforts were undertaken to explore possible routes to the Andes. Frequently, Guaraní Indians rendered assistance to the Spanish expeditions as guides and auxiliary troops (Métraux, 1946, p. 200). The Guaraní were eager for combat with the Indian tribes of the Gran Chaco with whom they had long been at war and for the Spanish explorers, their alliance with the Guaraní thus proved very profitable (Klassen, 1991, p. 23).

Only a few expeditions made it all the way through the Gran Chaco. By far the most were stranded somewhere on their way to the west, because of surprise attacks by the Chaco tribes, or by starvation.

In 1537, Juan de Ayolas and a group of companions left Asunción and indeed reached the foot of the Andean range. On their way back, however, the whole expedition was massacred by the Payaguá Indians. Other attempts like the expeditions of Domingo Martínez de Irala, Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca and Nufrio de Chavez likewise ended in failure or disaster (Altamirano et al., 1987, pp. 28-32; Klassen, 1991, p. 24; Métraux, 1946, p. 200).

Finally in 1548, a repeat attempt by Domingo Martínez de Irala, then governor of Asunción, realized the Spanish dream. Once he and his troops arrived at the Andes, however, they found that the rich Inca empire had already been occupied by Spaniards who had availed themselves of the shipping route *via* the Pacific. Shipping had proven far more effective than traversing the continent and the expeditions through the Gran Chaco came to an abrupt end. The importance of Asunción rapidly declined.

Although the Spanish expeditions that traversed the Gran Chaco in fact were neither numerous nor large, they brought about some drastic changes in the living condition of the Indian population.

First of all, the Indians came in contact with the "white representatives of the western civilization". On the whole, contacts

between the Spaniards and the Chaco Indians during this period of exploration were hostile and aggressive. Indian raids into the white settlements were common practice as were attacks by the Spanish military troops trying to protect the expeditions. The Spaniards had a considerable advantage over the Indians as to armaments and strategic knowledge. In spite of this preponderance, the Spaniards often had the greatest difficulty in suppressing the Indian attacks, although in the end, firearms usually ruled over bows and arrows.

It was mainly the Guaycurúan tribes who offered fierce resistance to the Spanish expeditions. The Payaguá Indians for instance, ruled the entire west bank of the Paraguay river. As soon as the Spaniards went ashore and sometimes even on the river itself, they encountered these Payaguá. With their fast canoes, these Indians were extremely mobile. They lived on the banks of, and on the islands in the Paraguay, but they navigated as far north as the Portuguese colony and downstream to the mouth of the Bermejo. Like many other tribes, however, the Payaguá did not survive. Large numbers were killed during military offensives against the Chaco Indians and others were incorporated into national society (Ganson, 1989, p. 79; Klassen, 1991, p. 19; Métraux, 1946, pp. 224-5).

Another important consequence of the contact that was established between Indians and Spaniards, was the rapid spread of all sorts of diseases among the Indians that formerly had been unknown in the Gran Chaco. The Spanish conquerors had brought with them diseases like measles, whooping-cough, smallpox and dysentery against which the Indians had no resistance. The diseases could break out in epidemic form and claim thousands of victims (Collier et al., 1985, p. 155).

The final consequence of the contact between Indians and Spaniards that I would like to mention here, is the introduction of the horse as a medium of transport to some Indian tribes. Again, it was the Guaycurúan linguistic family that was most influenced by the Spaniards in this respect. The adoption of the horse by the Abipón, the Toba, the Mocoví and the Mbayá, (and later also by the Macá and the Toba-Mascoi) completely changed the economic and social life of these tribes. Their mobility increased considerably which made them even more dreaded enemies in warfare not only to the Spanish troops who accompanied the expeditions, but also to other Gran Chaco tribes as well as to colonists on farms and ranches that were established in the fringe areas of the lowlands (Radin, 1942, p. 183; Regehr, 1979, pp. 87-8; Susnik, 1981, p. 9). Raids as a source of income became more common

for these Indian tribes, while on the other hand agriculture was largely abandoned (Métraux, 1946, p. 203).

During the period of exploration of the Gran Chaco interior, Spanish settlements arose on the western side of the area. Colonization efforts were concentrated in this region that formerly had been ruled by the Incas, because here resources and native labour were available on a large scale. Coming from the Andean *Cordillera*, the Spaniards first founded Santiago del Estero (1553) and later on Tucumán (1565), Mendoza (1566), Salta (1582) and Jujuy (1583) (Bünstorf, 1980, p. 325; Tata, 1977, p. 1).

Because of these townships, the present-day north-west Argentina was of great importance during the second half of the 16th century. The cultivation of cotton, maize and wheat, which had been brought here from Chili in 1556 by the Spaniard Hernán Mejia de Mirabal, lay the foundation for agricultural exploitation of this area (French, 1949, p. 51). The production of leather and wool and the breeding of mules also increased rapidly because the Spanish mining communities in the Andean *Cordillera* had an urgent need of these products. Trading in agricultural goods, often produced by Indian farmers, was the main economic activity which brought prosperity and power to the merchants in the towns and the region as a whole. The Spanish colonists and soldiers and their descendants, the so-called *Criollos*, came to dominate this western region. The central government, situated in Peru, progressively lost its grip on these *Criollos* who wanted nothing but independence.

Spanish colonization on the eastern fringe of the Gran Chaco started somewhat later. Asunción had already been founded in 1537 as a military base, but in later years, the surroundings of the city began to take on a more agrarian function. Together with towns like Corrientes (1588), Buenos Aires (1580) and Santa Fé (1573), it became part of the government of the Río de La Plata (Bünstorf, 1991, p. 376).

The two economic centres, concentrated on the one hand in Santiago del Estero and on the other in Asunción, existed alongside one another for a long time, competing for economic and political dominance. In the course of time, however, it became clear that the La Plata region offered far better perspectives for economic development, especially because of its open connection with the Atlantic.

The first settlement in the Chaco region itself was La Concepción, founded in 1585 on the bank of the Bermejo river some 150 kilometres

from the Paraná. The settlement was located inside the territory of the Guaycurú peoples and the village, which in fact served as a mission and a military centre at the same time, lasted for only fifty years (Labougle, 1969). With the destruction of La Concepción, the effort to establish direct communications between Corrientes and Tucumán had failed. Guadalcázar, founded for the same reason in 1628, was also destroyed shortly after its foundation. It would eventually take until 1781 before the Bermejo river was completely navigated for the first time. (Altamirano et al., 1987, pp. 33-40; Métraux, 1946, p. 201; Palmer, 1977, p. 6; Silva and de la Cruz, 1991, pp. 31-2).

Hand in hand with the military penetration and the colonization of the Spanish outer provinces in Latin America, came the spiritual subjection of the autochthonous population by means of the activities of religious missions. In the Río de La Plata region these missionary activities were for the greater part the work of the Jesuits. The clergymen of this Catholic order came to this region in 1588 to convert the Indian pagans to Christianity and to protect them against the malpractices of the conquerors of which they had heard cruel stories in Spain (Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 62).

Once they had arrived in the Río de La Plata region, the Jesuits founded the so-called *reducciones* where Indians and clergymen lived and worked together in close knit communities. These *reducciones* developed into an economically successful bastion where Indians indeed had to work hard, but where they were safe from the Spanish colonists and Portuguese *bandeirantes* who wanted to bring them into slavery. The agricultural cultivation, especially of *yerba mate*, taut discipline and a solid economic organization, brought the *reducciones* to unprecedented prosperity. At times, some 100,000 Indians, mainly Guaraní, were living and working with the Jesuits (Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 62).

Precisely this economic success and the fact that numerous Indian labourers were attracted by the *reducciones*, brought the Jesuit order into conflict with the civil authorities. Colonists saw their cheap labour leaving for the *reducciones* and the trade, for example in *yerba mate*, being dominated by the Jesuits. Sympathy for the missionaries vanished and in 1767 the conflict culminated in a decree of the Spanish Court which forced the Society of Jesus to return immediately to Spain. The *reducciones* soon fell into decay (Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 64; Labougle, 1969, p. 126).

Although the Jesuits worked mainly in north-west Argentina and

south-east Paraguay, they did establish some missionary posts in the Chaco. From 1723 till 1750, for example, they maintained contacts with a group of Zamuco Indians from their missionary post San Ignacio de Zamucos in the northern Chaco (Klassen, 1991, p. 35). In 1735, the Jesuits started working among the Vilelas and they founded a missionary post called San José de Petacas in the western part of the Chaco (Altamirano et al., 1987, p. 52). Besides these missions, the presence of the Jesuit Fathers at the fringe areas of the Chaco had a significant - direct or indirect - impact on the Indian way of life. Among the warlike Mbayá, for example, they converted many people which resulted in the pacification of the entire tribe. In the eastern Gran Chaco, along the Bermejo river, they brought some groups of Toba and Mataco into mission. Exact influences of the Jesuit activities are hard to measure, but for Métraux (1946, p. 202) it is evident that the more sedentary lifestyle and the stronger orientation of some Gran Chaco tribes on agriculture and livestock raising are due to their contact with these missionaries. Dietary change, like the drinking of *yerba mate*, as well as arts and handicraft also seem to point in this direction. The Jesuit missionary centres were the first European settlements established in the Gran Chaco.[4]

The threat of Portuguese territorial expansion during the 18th century induced Spain to strengthen their outer territories by handing over more political and economic independence to their colonies. Therefore, in 1776, the Spanish Crown founded the Viceroyalty of Río de La Plata, composed of the present-day Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Uruguay and part of Chile. Within the Spanish empire, the new viceroyalty with its capital Buenos Aires, gained free-trade possibilities. Finally, the La Plata region no longer depended on the viceroyalty of Peru (Tata, 1977, p. 3).

Commerce, agricultural and manufacturing activities in Río de La Plata soon assumed enormous proportions which yielded profits especially to the landowners, businessmen and entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, the new capitalistic upperclass became increasingly discontented with colonial rule. Rebellion raised its head and finally in 1810 resulted in the independence of Argentina. Paraguay in turn, in 1811 declared itself independent of Argentina.

---

[4] Other religious orders that in those days fulfilled a missionary task in the Río de La Plata region were the Franciscans and the Dominicans. Their activities, however, were of minor significance.

For the Gran Chaco area, these developments all seemed relatively insignificant. Economic exploitation and land occupation in the Viceroyalty of Río de La Plata were mainly concentrated in the Pampa region and the district of Buenos Aires. After the independence of both countries, it was to take at least some fifty to sixty years before the Gran Chaco region, which offered far less agricultural and industrial potential than other parts of the territory, became somewhat incorporated into the national economies and societies of Paraguay and Argentina.[5]

1.4 The Gran Chaco after independence

After gaining independence, the young nation Argentina had to contend with the same internal conflicts that had afflicted the Viceroyalty of Río de La Plata during the colonial era. The powerful provincial landlords, the so-called *caudillos*, acted as local military and political chiefs and opposed the politically centralized state. Many efforts were undertaken by centralists to establish a sovereign state. In the first three decades of the independent nation, more than thirty so-called presidents were installed, but none of them could cope with the *caudillos* and their armies of *gauchos* who held the power in the countryside (French, 1949, p. 58).

The *caudillo* and regionalist Juan Manuel de Rosas came into power in 1835, and with his installation the governmental struggle of the past 25 years ended. Rosas gained control over the material and human resources of the richest of Argentine provinces and thus became a powerful dictator who could count on the support of the countryside *caudillos*. With systematic violence, Rosas suppressed every form of opposition to his power and enriched himself and his supporters at the expense of the Argentinean population. During his government, Argentine economic development almost totally stagnated (McGann, 1966, p. 27).

In 1852, the troops of Juan Manuel de Rosas were defeated by the army of the centralist Justo José de Urquiza of Entre Rios. Urquiza immediately promulgated a constitution and established a federal republic with fourteen provinces. The liberalism of the new government laid the foundation for an era of political and economic modernization

[5] For an extensive review of the Gran Chaco history during the colonial era, see Altamirano, Déllamea de Prieto and Sbardella, (1987) *Historia del Chaco*.

during which Argentina made its transition to an export economy. Buenos Aires, as the capital of the federal state, expanded rapidly and became the residence of thousands of European immigrants. The economic growth of Argentina at the time was heavily supported by the production and export of wheat both of which gained enormous proportions. Livestock breeding increased as well and the Pampas were opened up for cattle and sheep raising. The construction of infrastructure like railroads, occasionally started by British capitalists, encouraged the colonization of the most remote parts of the country.

After Justo José de Urquiza, four presidents continued this successful liberalist strategy; the governments of Bartolomé Mitre, Sarmiento, Avellaneda and Saenz Peña supported the economic development of Argentina.

Economic success came to a brutal end with the installation of president Julio A. Roca in 1880. Dictatorship and corruption unsettled the nation that had made such progress over the past thirty years (French, 1949, p. 61).

The history of modern Paraguay began in 1811. Almost immediately after the break with Argentina, José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia came into power. *El Supremo*, as he liked to call himself, expropriated a major part of the holdings of powerful landowners and also forced the Catholic Church to cede its possessions. Practically the whole country became state property. Francia ruled the young nation on the base of strong personal charisma and succeeded in reviving the people's nationalism. His greatest aspiration was an economically independent Paraguay, and therefore almost all contacts with foreign countries were broken off (Pendle, 1954, p. 17).

Francia died in 1840 and Carlos Antonio López took over. The internal policy of far-reaching state interference remained unchanged but with regard to the outside world, Carlos Antonio López pursued an "open-door policy". International trading activities were stimulated and western knowledge and technology was imported. Under the rule of "López the first" Paraguay experienced substantial economic growth.

Relations with neighbouring countries, however, did not develop well. With Brazil, conflicts arose because of territorial disagreements in the north of Paraguay and the navigation of the Paraguay river. Meanwhile, Argentina still had not recognized the Paraguayan independence as legal and until then wanted to incorporate this lost "national territory" (Kleinpenning, 1987, pp. 77-78).

This inheritance was thrown into the hands of Francisco López when his father died in 1862. As president of a militarily insignificant nation, Francisco López was confronted with two antagonistic neighbouring countries. Blinded by recklessness, he threw his country into war against the Triple Alliance of Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil that saw itself supported by Great Britain. During five years of bitter war (1865-1870), Paraguay lost a large part of its population. Its infrastructure and economy were destroyed and a substantial part of the national territory was occupied by foreign nations. The once so flourishing country was beaten and left totally bankrupt (Pendle, 1954, p. 22).

After the war, the elite that had lost its influence during the Francia regime, restrengthened its power and gained control over national politics. The conservative government that was installed started a policy of selling state land mainly to foreign investors and speculators. With these transactions they hoped to improve the miserable financial position of Paraguay.

Political and economic developments of Paraguay and Argentina between 1810 and 1875 were of little significance for the Gran Chaco area. In both countries, there were still unoccupied regions that offered far better perspectives for agrarian and industrial exploitation.

Eastern Paraguay was only partly colonized and new settlers could still easily obtain a plot of land in the area. Natural conditions in the east were far more promising than in the dry and hot Gran Chaco. In Argentina, agrarian colonization was concentrated in the Pampa region. As long as there was still free land available elsewhere in the country, no colonist would freely take his chance in the Chaco where hostile Indians threatened settlers' lives and the climate thwarted every agricultural effort. In broad outline, the Gran Chaco remained the same desolate, vast area it had always been, where the Indian population could continue its traditional life in peace and isolation.

Some events, however, took place in the 19th century that would later lead to far-reaching changes in the living conditions of the Gran Chaco Indians.

In 1825 for example, Paraguay's first president José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia decided that all the private land occupied by owners who could not prove their property rights, would be considered state property and become so-called *tierra fiscal* (Kleinpenning, 1987, p.

75). As a consequence of this decree, the whole Paraguayan Chaco became state territory as well as a large part of Eastern Paraguay. In practice, however, the measure still was of little significance.

This changed in the 1880s when Paraguay had lost the war against the Triple Alliance and was in great need of finance. The selling of state-owned land, which was legalized by the constitution of 1870, began to offer an important source of state income from 1883 onwards. As is discussed in the following chapter, mainly foreign speculators and investors purchased large tracts of *tierras fiscales* in the Paraguayan Chaco, often at incredibly low prices (Kleinpenning, 1984a, pp. 17-8).

In Argentina, the period after independence was characterized by a policy of pacification with regard to the Indian population in the Chaco. At the time, settlements on the colonization frontier were being terrorized by some hostile Indian tribes who from time to time attacked and burned down the villages. These Indian actions caused stagnation of economic development and trading activities in the area, and endangered the colonist population.

From 1857 onwards, the Argentine government tried to control this problem by stationing military troops to defend strategic locations in the area. On the banks of the important navigable rivers and in several villages at the colonization front, troops were garrisoned in newly built fortresses (Borrini and Schaller, 1981, p. 9). When in the seventies the economic activities in the region expanded and new land was needed for colonization, the military troops gradually began to act more offensively against the Indian tribes, forcing them into the more remote interior of the Gran Chaco. During the last few decades of the 19th century, the offensive policy was continued (Bertone, 1985 p. 13).

As described in the foregoing, economic development of Paraguay and Argentina up to about 1875 was of little significance for the Gran Chaco and its autochthonous population. From then on, however, some significant changes occurred.

The immigration of European settlers increased in both countries and colonization was no longer concentrated in the already occupied regions like the Pampa, Patagonia and Eastern Paraguay. The Gran Chaco, which for centuries had been the territory of the Indian population, now became subjected to capitalistic forms of exploitation like extensive cattle ranching, extraction of tannin, land speculation and timber exploitation. Infrastructural improvements like the construction of railroads in the interior and of ports along the Paraná and Paraguay river

opened up the area, colonist towns arose and the land became a scarce trading. With these changes, the Gran Chaco and its native inhabitants were on the threshold of a new era.

2. THE INCORPORATION OF THE GRAN CHACO AFTER 1875

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the incorporation of the Gran Chaco after 1875. Firstly I have briefly analyzed the concepts of incorporation and colonization and their theoretical premises. Section two reviews a number of aspects involved in the process of incorporation. The following three sections discuss the exploitation of forests for timber and *quebracho* wood, cattle breeding and agriculture. In section six, I explore the role played by religious missions in the process of incorporation, and more specifically, the efforts of the missionaries to pacify the Indian population of the Gran Chaco. The presence of military forces in the Gran Chaco and their contribution to the incorporation of this region and its inhabitants are dealt with in section seven. I conclude this chapter by focusing on the governmental activities of Paraguay and Argentina and make an inventory of the improvements and bottlenecks in the development of infrastructure and regional planning in the area.

In concentrating on the history and the economic development of the Gran Chaco, I pay special attention to the changes that have occurred in the spatial structure of the region and confine myself to the main themes relating to the Indian population. Territorial incorporation and consequently the diminishing access to land for the indigenous people, is the continuing thread throughout this chapter. More detailed descriptions may by found in the references.

Somewhere around 1875, a number of developments began to take shape in the Gran Chaco which later would result in more drastic changes.

The economic development of Argentina became dominated by external relations. Industrial goods, mainly coming from England, were imported on a large scale and the European investments in the Argentine economy increased. Large numbers of immigrants, primarily from Italy, Spain, Germany, and to a lesser extent from France and England, settled

in the country. Most immigrants settled in the expanding capital Buenos Aires, while some moved to the Pampas or the Gran Chaco where they hoped to get hold of a piece of land or to find employment as rural labourers.

Argentina became a major supplier of agricultural goods for the rapidly industrializing Europe. The export of wool, hides, meat and cereals increased and the government sought to enlarge the national productive area. The sparsely populated northern regions also seemed to offer a large potential for various forms of exploitation. Timber producers, tannin extractors, cotton farmers and some cattle ranchers purchased extensive areas at low prices and started production. A steady incorporation of the Gran Chaco set in.

During the last decades of the 19th century, Paraguay was recovering from its war against the Triple Alliance. Because of the war, Paraguay had lost parts of its national territory. In the Gran Chaco, the area between the Bermejo river and the Pilcomayo river no longer belonged to Paraguay but had been annexed by Argentina (Kleinpenning, 1984a, p. 17).

Some years after the war against the Triple Alliance, the Paraguayan government tried to replenish the national economy by selling state owned land. These attempts had an incredible effect on the Chaco, for extensive areas fell into the hands of foreign investors. With these changes, the incorporation of the Paraguayan Chaco commenced.

2.2 Incorporation and colonization

Before discussing in detail how the process of incorporation developed in the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco, it seems useful to define more clearly what this process of incorporation is actually about. This somewhat theoretical introduction has been included in this chapter to provide an abstract framework for elaboration in the following sections.

The 20th century can be characterized as the era of modernization, technological expansion and increasing interdependence. Drastic intensifications have occurred with respect to international relations, the transit of material goods and the exchange of information. The world is no longer divided into more or less independent and closed nations, but has been transformed into a global, interconnected system whose

influence reaches even the most isolated areas. This process of increasing contact and interdependence can be defined as "incorporation".

The Latin term incorporation literally means the wrapping up of formerly independent units into a broader, more powerful and often more complete order, or, in other words, the absorption of small entities into a larger. These units or entities can refer to social or cultural groups, production sectors, areas or individuals. Incorporation is usually the result of unbalanced power relations and is closely linked to developments imposed "from above". Incorporated units, groups or areas often face negative rather than positive consequences from the fact that they become part of a larger entity (Kleinpenning, 1991, p. 1).

Incorporation is not a unidimensional process, for it is possible to discriminate different fields, different dimensions of incorporation that nevertheless are strongly interrelated (ibid, 1991, pp. 2-9).

The first dimension I would like to mention here is the socio-cultural aspect of incorporation. Minorities within national societies, people living in isolated areas and more or less independent cultural units become part of a broader socio-cultural system. Cultural differences within societies tend to disappear as a consequence of assimilation, integration or adaptation. Socio-cultural incorporation is often closely linked to governmental policy, and of course, the media play an important role in this respect.

Secondly, incorporation implies changes in the economic field. The so-called traditional sectors of the economy become incorporated in the modern economic order and have to be adapted to the capitalist mode of production. Wage labour is likely to make its entrance, barter is replaced by a monetary system and self-sufficiency by trade. With regard to the economic incorporation, access to, and attainability of the market is of crucial importance.

Finally, a third aspect is territorial incorporation. By way of annexation, conquest or colonization, formerly independent or isolated areas and nations become incorporated into the global (or national) industrial and residential spheres.

In the context of this book, the spatial component of incorporation is of major importance. In the Gran Chaco, and more specifically among the Indian communities of the region, economic, cultural and social changes indeed are manifest but in fact are a consequence of the spatial changes that are taking and have taken place within the Indian territories. It

seems therefore useful to elaborate more on the spatial aspects of incorporation.

Colonization is one of the spatial processes through which a society occupies an area outside its sphere of influence. Seen from this point of view, the process of colonization is a specific form of incorporation, which induces an ongoing occupation of previously unattractive and often unknown areas. Colonization is usually initiated for economic reasons. With or without governmental support, new areas are opened up to serve forest exploitation, agriculture, livestock production or mining activities. The fringe areas between the newly established society and the remote, still sparsely occupied areas, are often referred to as "frontiers".

In Latin America a wide variety of settlers is involved in the process of colonization. The most numerous among these settlers are small peasants, to whom migration to the frontier normally constitutes a survival strategy. Large private entrepreneurs and transnational corporations, engaged in cattle ranching or plantation agriculture, constitute another important group, although less numerous than small peasants. They usually enter the frontier in the expectation of high returns on their investments and to diversify their activities. Besides these agricultural producers, the frontier is populated by miners, wood extractors, traders and agro-industrial enterprises. Lastly, colonization areas attract large numbers of speculators because land prices tend to rise enormously within a short period after settlement. Especially large entrepreneurs consider speculative investments in land at the frontier a profitable activity (see e.g. Nelson, 1986; Partridge, 1989; Sawyer, 1984; Wood, 1983).

Throughout Latin American history, governments have tried to promote frontier development. Several reasons serve to explain the government's involvement in colonization. First of all, it is assumed that colonization induces economic growth when the agriculturally exploited area extends and new resources are made available. Additionally, frontier development is believed to relieve population pressure in traditional zones of agricultural production. Through colonization, governments hope to improve the living conditions of peasants and small-scale farmers, without damaging the interests of large landowners in the already settled areas. Lastly, governments encourage settlement in uninhabited or sparsely populated parts of the country, especially those located near national borders, to safeguard these territories against possible annexation by neighbouring countries.

The extent and manner in which Latin American governments interfere in the process of colonization, has varied strongly from time to time and from country to country. Sometimes, authorities directly guided frontier development by establishing state colonies. These official colonies mostly favoured small producers who received small, fairly equal plots, neatly laid out by official surveyors. In other cases, governments interfered in the settlement on the frontier by creating favourable conditions for private investment by large companies. They have sometimes encouraged this by providing cheap credit and subsidies, and by granting tax exemptions for entrepreneurs (e.g. Albert, 1992, p. 36; Sawyer, 1984, p. 186). Processes of colonization that are not influenced by government policy, are often referred to as "spontaneous colonization".

To capture the diversity of the colonization frontiers, various classifications have been made employing various criteria. Hennessy (1978), for instance, approaches the frontier by looking at the types of products it produces and distinguishes, for example, coffee, sugar, wheat, rubber, gold and cattle frontiers. In addition, he speaks of dynamic and static frontiers, and frontier expansion and retraction. Others, like Katzman (1975, p. 269), use the settlers' contribution to national and international markets as the main yardstick to differentiate between subsistence and export propelled frontiers. Sawyer's (1984, pp. 182-93) distinction is based on the modes of production in frontier areas, which he exemplifies by discerning commodity peasant fronts, speculative fronts and capitalist ranching fronts.

Within the context of this book, I pay special attention to the distinction between "frontiers of inclusion" and "frontiers of exclusion", made by authors like Hennessy (1978, p. 19), Lattimore (1962, pp. 469 a.f. 529), Mikesell (1968, pp. 153-4) and Volbeda (1984, pp. 21-2). A frontier of inclusion is characterized by the fact that the indigenous population of the colonized region participates, in some way or another, in the social, cultural and economic development of the region. Frontiers of exclusion on the other hand, do not involve the incorporation of indigenous inhabitants, but instead remain the effort of a selected, closed group of foreign settlers, who usually chase away the indigenes.

Whether an indigenous society is included, or as some say assimilated, in the pioneering society, depends on a number of factors. According to Lattimore (1962), it is primarily related to the cultural similarities and differences between the two societies. On the one hand,

he associates the incorporation of an indigenous society with the degree to which it can or wishes to adapt its socio-economic organization to that of the "pioneering" society. Mikesell (1968, p. 154) illustrates this for Latin America by noting that the sedentary Indians encountered by the Spanish conquerors on their arrival in the Andean highlands were easier to incorporate than the hunters and gatherers of the lowlands, just because they were sedentary and offered limited resistance to the conquerors. On the other hand, inclusion also depends upon whether the penetrating society wishes to respect the rights of the original inhabitants. With respect to Latin America, Mikesell (1968, p. 154) and Hennessy (1978, p. 54) mention the missionary zeal of the Spanish Catholic Church as an important factor in the inclusion of Indian societies. Additionally, they suggest that the Spanish invaders simply had to incorporate Indians into their society, because immigration from Europe was relatively minor and included few women.

Another important factor seems to be the political power the indigenes are able to gain. This is, of course, related to the numerical strength of the indigenous population, its organizational capabilities, and of course its ambitions in this respect. Authors like Burger (1987, p. 44) and Maybury-Lewis (1984) suggest that if indigenous people succeed in gaining political power, they may be better able to assimilate into the penetrating society on their own terms and at their own pace. Political power might enable the Indians to demand their rights. Especially the legal recognition of their communities and collective landownership are considered important prerequisites to the emancipation of indigenous populations within the newly established society at the frontier.

Lastly, the inclusion of indigenous people in frontier society is strongly influenced by the needs of the penetrating economy. If, for example, a pioneering society is in need of cheap labour which it cannot provide itself, indigenous people may be incorporated into the development of the frontier. If, on the other hand, the settlers are not particularly interested in indigenous labour, but instead in gaining access to the resources controlled by the indigenes, the latter may find themselves excluded from frontier development (see e.g. Maybury-Lewis, 1984)

Frontiers of inclusion do not necessarily create equal opportunities for the indigenous population, as is suggested by modernization theorists who presume that, in the course of the colonization process, the benefits of western capitalist society will eventually trickle down to all people living in the frontier area. On the contrary. Several authors point to the

subservient relations and exploitation to which the autochthones, as an ethno-cultural group, become subjected (González Casanova, 1965, pp. 130-1). They claim that, as a rule, indigenous communities are only incorporated into the lower segments of frontier society and become slaves, serfs, low-paid labourers, share-croppers or peasants. As such they are exploited by other ethno-cultural groups, which are dominant. This exploitation, named "internal colonialism", takes place through different forms of extra-economic coercion like discrimination, violence and plunder, as well as through substandard remuneration and unequal exchange of products. Internal colonialism is manifest at the political level as well since indigenous groups are often excluded from political participation, access to the state and to civil society. In other words, frontiers of inclusion often incorporate the indigenous population in such a way that it is economically and politically marginalized (Kay, 1989, pp. 58-88).

Although colonization areas in Latin America show a wide diversity, some characteristics seem to fit most of them.

Firstly I observe that, nowadays, colonization is taking place in areas of "secondary economic importance", since the most promising parts of Latin America have long since been occupied and put into use. So-called remote regions that in the past were hardly accessible for colonists and where moreover prospects for agrarian, livestock or mining activities were poor because of the natural conditions, have recently been transformed into colonization frontiers. Environmental constraints of these remote areas like drought, soil infertility and poor attainability, are increasingly being compensated by technical advancements. Irrigation, draining, crop improvement, artificial fertilization and so on, have improved the prospects of a successful and profitable exploitation of these remote areas.

Secondly, the development of the frontier tends to follow a number of more or less fixed stages (e.g. Kleinpenning, 1991, p. 12).

The first stage of colonization refers to the traditional modes of production. Non-indigenous hunters and gatherers, pastoralists, shifting cultivators, fishermen and subsistence farmers may open up new areas in order to safeguard their survival. Although the impact of these traditional modes of exploitation on the region's resources is often very modest, with the rise of these activities, the actual incorporation of the area involved has begun.

The second stage of colonization can be characterized as the

transitional phase. The more or less traditional sectors of the region's economy as seen in the first stage, become transformed into, or pushed aside by, modern, often capitalistic modes of production. In the transitional phase of incorporation, the region's production becomes orientated towards a market and no longer principally meets the demands of the producers themselves (Foweraker, 1981, p. 27). During the transitional stage, people from outside the region may settle down in the frontier area where they purchase land and start production. Often, extractive industries are the fore-runners (Foweraker, 1981, p. 28; Stunnenberg and Kleinpenning, 1993). Resources like timber, tannin, rubber and all kinds of fruits are extracted on a large scale, often at first alongside the rivers in order to facilitate the transport of the produce. Following this, the opened up area is often very large but not totally cleared, and cattle raising is likely to make its entrance into the area. When there are no physical constraints, crop farming is likely to increase as well, especially if land prices are increasing and the food needs of the region swell. In time, a growing number of farmers try to improve the returns of their land by intensifying their farming methods. New areas are also opened up to expand the productive area.

The third and last stage of colonization is closely linked to the modern economy. Employment in the tertiary and quaternary sectors makes its entrance into the region, land becomes a scarce commodity and speculation with land as well as land reform become more common. The last stage is the stage of consolidation. The dynamic economy of the region crystallizes and a conglomeration of powerful politicians, landowners and entrepreneurs rule the roost. By the time colonization has entered its last stage, a process of urbanization has usually set in. During the traditional and to a certain level also during the transitional stage, rural developments dominate the region's economy and urban centres play an inferior role. During the phase of modern incorporation and colonization, however, power and trading activities become concentrated mainly in the urban areas. Rural changes come to depend largely on the urban dynamics.

The foregoing theoretical assumptions add to a notion of incorporation and colonization and the affected areas. In the following sections of this chapter, I examine the different aspects of the process of incorporation with respect to the Gran Chaco to see what changes came about in the area after 1875.

2.3 The extraction of timber and tannin

Timber extraction

The exploitation of the Gran Chaco's forest reserves began in the 1860s and 1870s. Forests were mainly concentrated in the eastern part of the Gran Chaco where precipitation is relatively abundant, where temperatures are moderate and where soils are less salty than in the west.

Timber producers were the first to enter the almost impenetrable Gran Chaco. Various species of trees in the area were, and still are, not only rare but also very profitable for exploitation. The most wanted species were the white and red *quebracho* trees. Other favoured species were the *algarroba*, the *lapacho* and the *guayacán* (Hueck, 1966, p. 243; Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 413).

Because of the fact that in the 1860s, transport facilities other than shipping were lacking in the area, timber producers arrived by boat and started logging at the banks of the Paraná and Paraguay river. Once the first forest zones near the river had been cleared, the entrepreneurs gradually penetrated the Gran Chaco and opened up new regions for logging. Some larger companies, like the enterprise Carlos Casado S.A., even constructed railways in the region in order to facilitate the transport to and from the river. Some of these railways penetrated the forest for more than a hundred kilometres (Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 197). In this way, millions of metric tons of timber have been logged in the Gran Chaco, hauled out of the area, and shipped down to Asunción, Corrientes, the Pampa or Buenos Aires.

From the point of view of timber production, the Paraguayan Chaco offered far less opportunities than the Argentine part. Compared with Argentina, Paraguayan stands of commercially valuable species of trees were small and moreover hardly accessible. At the time, the Paraguayan Chaco could only be penetrated from the east where the Chaco abuts on the Paraguay river. Connections overland with Brazil in the north-east, Bolivia in the north and west and Argentina in the south, were poor and highly unreliable. The Argentine forest resources on the other hand, were of good quality, stands of commercially interesting species were large and besides were relatively easy to exploit. All this explains why timber production was of far greater economic importance in the Argentine Chaco.

The timber companies had no difficulty in selling the wood at good prices. At the time, the raw material was needed in the expanding

construction sector. For example, during the period 1876-1889, Argentina built no less than 2000 kilometres of railway. The vast majority of the sleepers originated from the Gran Chaco (Iñigo Carrera, 1983, p. 8). The forest resources were also welcomed by mining companies that used poles to prop the mine shafts. A large portion of the logging took place to produce firewood and charcoal, and to stoke the locomotives of the expanding railways. A considerable portion of the logged material was used for the construction of telegraph poles and fences. Finally, some of the hardwood species, especially the ones that could be attractively polished, were used in the furniture industry.

In the 1860s and 1870s, the Argentine province of Corrientes was an important outlet for timber (Bünstorf, 1971c, p. 180). At that time, Corrientes was more densely populated than other regions in the north and its economy was already developing. Since 1883, Argentina has also exported its timber to neighbouring countries in Latin America, and to South Africa and India (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 257). In Paraguay, the timber was transported to Asunción, to some developing zones in the eastern part of the country, and to Argentina from where export took place.

The production of timber usually took place in the so-called *obrajes*. These *obrajes* were small, often temporary settlements where the timber was logged and prepared for transport. Sometimes elementary manufacturing of the raw material took place. A large portion of the labourers had provisional houses or tents in the *obraje* where now and then some basic services like a school, a small shop and health care were available. The working conditions in the *obrajes* were, and probably still are, very primitive. Man- and animal power were the basic elements in the lumbering and the transport and normally no tools other than axes were used for felling trees.

Working conditions for the labourers in the *obrajes* were often very difficult. High temperatures, low wages, long working days and no job security. Indians living in the vicinity of the settlements also worked as labourers in the timber industries (Iñigo Carrera, 1983, p. 41; Métraux, 1946, p. 204). At first they only came to the *obrajes* during the periods when they could earn a living by logging (March and April, October and November). Later on, some of the Indians came to live in the *obrajes* with the non-Indian labourers.

Since the end of the 19th century, logging has gradually increased. During the 1920 and '30s, the production almost stabilized, because the expansion of railways came to a stop. At that time Argentina had already some 45,000 kilometres of railway, constructed with no less than 45 million sleepers! (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 258). However, when the second World-War started and energy was scarce and expensive, a new impulse was given to the timber sector. Production increased rapidly and by far the largest portion of the wood ended up as firewood. The introduction of mechanized logging methods and the improvement of the infrastructure in the Gran Chaco after the war induced a continuation of the growth in production.

In 1988, timber production in the provinces of Formosa and Chaco totalled over a million tons, whereas in 1981, the Paraguayan Chaco provided 100,000 tons of timber (Instituto Geográfico Militar, 1989, pp. 37 and 42; Kleinpenning and Zoomers, 1987, p. 219).[1]

Although the forest resources in the Gran Chaco are immense, the large-scale logging of trees has had, and still has, an incredible impact on the ecological balance of the area. Especially for the hardwood species which take at least one hundred years to grow to full size. Once an area has been cleared by logging or otherwise, these hardwood species will not easily regenerate. Some species of trees, only to be found in the Gran Chaco, are likely to disappear for good. To this day, reforestation of areas or specific species is very rare in Paraguay and Argentina. In fact, the timber extractors are exhausting the natural resources of the Gran Chaco without considering the long-term consequences.

Another process is aggravating this serious situation. The ever increasing demand for land in the area by farmers and livestock breeders induces a gradual occupation of the region. Before the land can be used for agricultural purposes, it has to be cleared, either by logging and selling the resources at the market, or simply by burning down the complete vegetation. Extensive areas have been opened up without even using the valuable material on hand. As I discuss in sections four and five of this chapter, the production of timber is no longer the main reason for clearing areas in the Gran Chaco, agricultural expansion has become the motor of the process of colonization.

---

[1] The extraction of *quebracho* trees for the production of tannin is included in these figures. *Quebracho* exploitation, however, has decreased strongly since the 1940s when the market for tannin collapsed.

Tannin extraction[2]

At the end of the 19th century, the exploitation of timber for construction and manufacturing was not the only motive for logging the forest reserves in the Gran Chaco. In 1872 the Frenchman Emilio Poirier discovered that the *quebracho colorado* tree, which is widespread in the eastern part of the area, contains a considerable amount of tannin (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 258).

Two species of the *quebracho colorado* seemed to be very lucrative for exploitation. The *quebracho colorado chaqueño* (or *schinopsis balansea*) which contains no less than 31% tannin, and the *quebracho colorado santiagueño* (or *schinopsis lorentzii*) with some 15% of tannin (Altamirano et al., 1987, p. 209).

At that time the tannin extract was valuable for it was used in the manufacture of leather (the tanning process). Other applications of tannin were the control of elasticity in pottery manufacturing, the compounding of various sorts of paint and the preparation of some medicinal products.

With the discovery of the tannin component in the *quebracho colorado*, the Gran Chaco became a sort of "gold mine" within a few years. Especially in the northern parts of Argentina, the provinces of Formosa and Chaco, large reserves of the *quebracho colorado chaqueño* were waiting to be exploited. Relatively small but still significant were the *quebracho colorado chaqueño* reserves in the Paraguayan and Bolivian part of the Chaco. In the Argentine provinces of Santiago del Estero and Santa Fé, the less profitable *quebracho colorado santiagueño* grew in large quantities (Hueck, 1966, p. 234).

The actual exploitation of the "axe-breaker" (*quebracho* is derived from the Spanish words *quebrar*, "to break", and *hacha*, "axe") started around 1875 in Argentina. During these first years of exploitation, the raw material was not processed in the Gran Chaco area itself. Ships returning to Europe transported tons of *quebracho colorado* logs to harbours in Europe where the tannin was extracted from the trees in small plants (Kleinpenning, 1992, p. 74).

Within a few years, the demand for tannin increased rapidly because the excellent quality of the *quebracho* extract became well-known to the tanning companies of Europe as well as of Argentina and

---

[2] Parts of this section have been published in: Stunnenberg and Kleinpenning: The Role of Extractive Industries in the Process of Colonization: the Case of *Quebracho* Exploitation in the Gran Chaco.

the United States. Many German entrepreneurs purchased extensive areas in the Argentine Chaco and shipped the *quebracho* logs to overseas ports. At the end of the 19th century, the number of tannin processing plants in the Gran Chaco also increased. The staff and technicians, however, were largely of European origin.

Within a short time, the areas with considerable resources of the *quebracho colorado* were purchased or leased by the tannin firms and logging concessions were acquired. The areas had to be especially large since the *quebracho* trees grew dispersed between other species of trees and bushes. In fact, no more than ten to twenty logs of *quebracho colorado* could be exploited per hectare. At that time, the costs of purchasing land in the Gran Chaco were very low and enabled the tannin companies to purchase thousands of hectares. The Gran Chaco became one of the world's greatest tannin suppliers.

In 1880 the German Harteneck brothers established the first tannin plant in Argentina. They had processed the *quebracho* trunks for some years in Germany and decided to transfer the tannin production to Latin America in order to economize the extraction process. Moreover, the Harteneck brothers hoped to sell at least a portion of the tannin on the Argentine market, because leather industries in the country were growing substantially (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 258). In the course of time, no less than 41 tannin processing plants were established in the Gran Chaco, 8 in the Paraguayan and 33 in the Argentinean Chaco (Bünstorf, 1982, pp. 18-9; Kleinpenning, 1992, p. 256).

The largest number of factories came into existence during the first decades of this century. 19 factories were established before 1914. During the first World-War, the demand for tannin increased drastically because of the large quantities of shoe leather that needed to be tanned (Romero, 1977, p. 162). This resulted in the establishment of 11 tannin factories in the area between 1914 and 1920. After 1920, another 11 factories came into existence. Monte Quemado and Weisburg were the last opened factories which started producing in Santiago del Estero in 1941 and 1942 respectively. The establishment and closing down of tannin factories in the Gran Chaco is reflected in table 2.1.

Most tannin companies established their plants on the banks of the Paraguay and Paraná rivers. The availability of water was of crucial importance, firstly because the factories needed a rather large supply of fresh water in the industrial process and secondly because of the

Table 2.1 Tannin factories in the Gran Chaco

Location/Settlement	Province/Department	Founded	Closed
Paraguayan Chaco			
Puerto Casado	Alto Paraguay	1889	-
Puerto Galileo	Presidente Hayes	1906	1920s
Puerto Max	Concepción	1901	1920s
Puerto Maria	Alto Paraguay	1905	1920s
Puerto Sastre	Alto Paraguay	1903	>1932
Puerto Guaraní	Alto Paraguay	1910	>1932
Puerto Médanos	Alto Paraguay	1911	>1932
Puerto Pinasco	Presidente Hayes	1918/21	>1932
Argentinean Chaco			
Peguahó	Corrientes	1880	1909
Fives Lille	Santa Fé	1895	1918
Calchaquí	Santa Fé	1899	1916
Río Arazá	Chaco	1902	1956
Villa Guillermina	Santa Fé	1903	1951
Las Palmas	Chaco	1903	1954
Puerto Tirol	Chaco	1904	-
El Mocoví	Santa Fé	1904	1911
Formosa	Formosa	1905	-
La Gallareta	Santa Fé	1906	1963
Tartagal	Santa Fé	1909	1950
Villa Ana	Santa Fé	1911	1955
Santa Felicia	Santa Fé	1915	1935
Santa Fe	Santa Fé	1915	1950
Fontana	Chaco	1916	1971
Villa Jalón	Chaco	1916	1935
Colonia Benítez	Chaco	1916	1925
Puerto Vilelas	Chaco	1917	1960
Villa Angela	Chaco	1917	-
Samuhú	Chaco	1917	-
General Pinedo	Chaco	1920	1942
Colonia Benítez	Chaco	1920	1925
Reconquista	Santa Fé	1920	1935
Colonia Baranda	Chaco	1923	1949
Puerto Bermejo	Chaco	1924	1941
Resistencia	Chaco	1922	1960
La Escondida	Chaco	1927	-
Yuto	Jujuy	1929	1971
Formosa	Formosa	1931	1962

(continued on the next page)

(continuation table 2.1)

location/settlement	province / department	founded	closed
Villa Ocampo	Santa Fé	1931	1939
La Verde	Chaco	1939	-
Monte Quemado	Santiago del Estero	1941	1962
Weisburg	Santiago del Estero	1942	1960

(Bünstorf, 1982 pp. 18-9; Kleinpenning, 1992, p. 256; Pincus, 1968, p. 85)

transport facilities offered by a navigable river in the vicinity. The *quebracho* logs were chipped and soaked in hot water for some time in order to extract the tannin. Many factories were therefore established on the banks of the river, at one of the tributaries or near the lakes and marshes in the *Chaco Bajo*. A few companies tried to exploit subsoil water supplies by boring and pumping, often with little success.

Another important aspect regarding the location of the tannin processing plants during the period of installation was of course access to sufficient supplies of *quebracho colorado*.

During the first years of tannin production, the bullock wagon, the so-called *cachapés* played an important role as a mode of transportation. As time went on, more and more companies constructed private railways in order to transport the *quebracho* logs from the exploitation areas to the plants. In Paraguay 468 kilometres of "*quebracho* railway" were constructed, while the *La Forestal* Company controlled some 300 kilometres of railway in the Argentinean Chaco (Iñigo Carrera, 1983, p. 45). The construction of railways for the exploitation of the *quebracho colorado* had a strong impact on the Gran Chaco area, because the improved infrastructure supported the incorporational process that was taking place at the time.

After some years of felling trees near the banks of the river, the reserves declined and some companies decided to transfer the factories to distant stands in the interior. The proximity of the raw material, and consequently the saving in transport expenses, would compensate for the shortage of water in these regions. Some factories even purchased *quebracho* logs in forest regions more than 200 kilometres away from their original location (see map 2.1). The exhausted, abandoned areas are sometimes referred to as the "hollow frontier".

By far the largest *quebracho* company in Argentina was *La Forestal Argentina S.A., Maderas y Explotaciones Comerciales e Industriales*, or simply *La Forestal*. The enterprise was founded in 1906 and has dominated the *quebracho* industry in the country ever since. *La Forestal* started only two tannin plants in the Gran Chaco. However, through buying and participating in plants of other companies, it gained control over eleven more tannin processing plants in the area. *La Forestal* almost immediately closed down some of the tannin factories it had purchased. Apparently, by purchasing a number of tannin plants from other companies, *La Forestal* only wanted to eliminate the competitors and strengthen its own position. In 1926 *La Forestal* owned 2.32 million hectares of land (Altamirano et al., 1987, p. 213; Bünstorf, 1971c, p. 190).

In Paraguay the major producer of tannin was initially *Compañía de Tierras Carlos Casado, S.A.* After the mid 1880s, the Argentine entrepreneur Juan Carlos Casado del Alisal purchased no less than 5.6 million hectares of land in the Paraguayan Chaco. In 1889 the Casado family opened up a tannin plant on the banks of the Paraguay river. The port where their plant was located was named after the family; "Puerto Casado". Up to 1900, the plant of Casado, *La Hispana Paraguaya*, was the only producer of tannin in the country. In later years, other important companies would enter the tannin market in Paraguay (Kleinpenning, 1992, pp. 260-5).

The extraction of tannin offered employment to thousands of labourers. Bünstorf (1982, p. 12) estimated that, in the 1930s and 1940s, some 5,000 labourers were employed in the Argentine plants. He added, however, that the total number, including the lumbermen in the logging camps and the labourers involved in the transport of the logs, must have been at least 15,000 to 20,000 people. Kleinpenning (1992, p. 258) mentions that in 1917, 2,734 people worked in the Paraguayan tannin factories. The determination of the exact number of labourers involved in the *quebracho* sector is hindered by the fact that the vast majority of the labourers worked only temporarily in the logging, since the demand for labour was strongly seasonal. A large proportion of these labourers originated from Corrientes, Santiago del Estero and Eastern Paraguay, while some came from other regions in the Gran Chaco (Romero, 1977, p. 160).

Indians were also mobilized as labourers on a large scale (Métraux, 1946, p. 204). Contractors and factory management, however,

Map 2.1 Tannin factories, railways and *quebracho* stands in the Gran Chaco (Bünstorf, 1982; Krause, 1952; Randle, 1981; Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963)

strongly discriminated between Indian and non-Indian labourers by paying the latter higher wages and offering them better working conditions. Indian labour was often hired on a temporary, or even daily basis. Wages were sometimes paid in cheap liquor or other goods of little value (Maybury-Lewis and Howe, 1980, p. 54).

Government policy in Argentina aimed to ensure the availability of an Indian labour force for the economic development of the area. Indian *reducciones* were established in which the labourers could settle and be hired when needed. In these settlements the indigenous people sometimes received a small plot of land in order to safeguard their survival during times of labour surplus. However, during the logging season, from March to April and from October to November, contractors forced the Indians to work in the *obrajes*. The *reducciones* conserved a permanent labour force and helped to keep this labour force cheap. There were *reducciones* for various branches of production like the timber extraction, the cotton and sugar harvesting and, of course, the logging of the *quebracho colorado* trees (Iñigo Carrera, 1982, pp. 22-6).

The exploitation of the *quebracho colorado* and, more specifically, the production of tannin underwent a rapid growth in the Gran Chaco. As early as 1908, Argentina and Paraguay together exported some 300,000 tons of *quebracho* logs and 70,000 tons of *quebracho* extract. In the 1930s, the production of tannin had increased to over 400,000 tons annually. As the number of processing plants in the area increased, the export of the unprocessed *quebracho* logs diminished.

During the first decades of exploitation, the bulk of *quebracho* logs and extract was shipped to various industrial centres in Western Europe like Le Havre, Bremen and Hamburg. After the first World-War, the United States of America became an important outlet, while the export to European countries decreased.

Due to the fact that the main part of the exported goods was shipped from Buenos Aires, costs of transport for Argentinean companies were lower than those of their Paraguayan competitors. On the other hand, the Paraguayan firms could purchase extensive areas with *quebracho colorado* resources more easily, for the land prices in Paraguay at that time were lower than in the Argentine Chaco. The output of the tannin sector in Argentina has always been much higher than in Paraguay. The Argentine and Paraguayan export of *quebracho* extract is represented by figure 2.1.

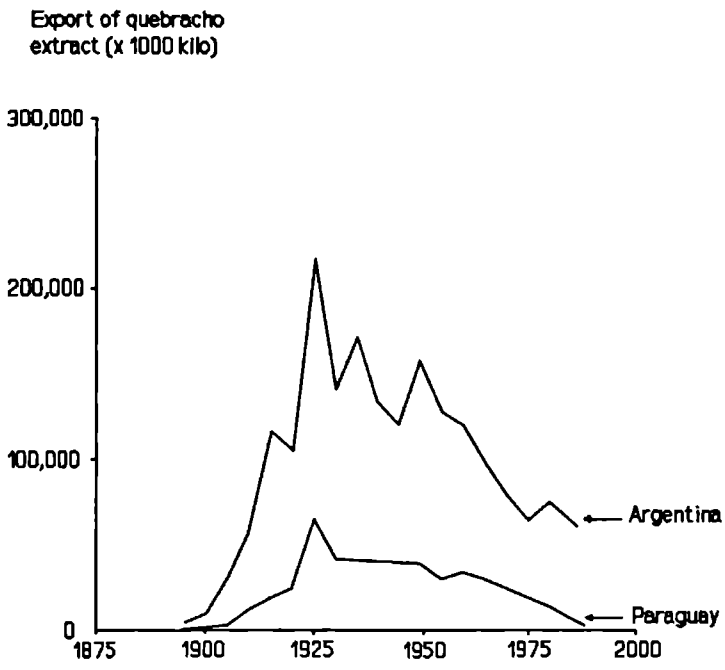


Figure 2.1 The export of *quebracho* extract (1895-1987) (Bünstorf, 1982, p. 16; Kleinpenning, 1992, p. 275; Pincus, 1968, p. 174; Statistisches Bundesamt, 1988/1989)

The significance of the *quebracho* and tannin production in the Gran Chaco is illustrated by the following numbers. Some 3.5 tons of *quebracho* wood are needed to produce 1 ton of tannin. These 3.5 tons of *quebracho* correspond more or less to a quarter of an hectare in the Gran Chaco area. Therefore, a tannin factory, with an average production of some 13,600 tons of tannin annually, results in the clearing of an area of 3,400 hectares (Bünstorf, 1971c, p. 191). During the 1920s and '30s, no less than 30 plants in the region were processing *quebracho colorado*. Setting aside the export of unprocessed *quebracho* to foreign countries, the 30 plants in the area together plundered some 102,000 hectares of Chaco bush annually. These figures relate to areas with relatively abundant resources of the *quebracho colorado*. In those

regions where the wanted trees were in shorter supply, far larger areas fell a prey to the extraction industries.

Bünstorf (1971c, p. 196) estimates that during the period 1895-1968, 10,400,000 hectares of land in the Gran Chaco were cleared of the *quebracho colorado*. These 73 years of exploitation resulted in the production of 41.7 million tons of tannin. Reforestation of the *quebracho* species, *schinopsis balansea* and *schinopsis lorentzii*, has never been practised in any structural sense.

After the peak of production in the 1930s and 1940s, the tannin industry in Paraguay and Argentina collapsed rather drastically. In 1981, only seven plants were producing tannin in the Gran Chaco, one in the Paraguayan Chaco, in Puerto Victoria (formerly named Puerto Casado), five in the Argentine province of Chaco and one in the province of Formosa. All the others have been closed down over the years (Bünstorf, 1982, pp. 18-9).

The largest portion of the plants was closed down between 1945 and 1965. The collapse of the tannin industry, which for decades had played a major role in the area's economic development, was caused by two changes.

Firstly, the demand for the *quebracho* extract decreased because alternative sources were found. Tannin extracted from *mimosa* for example, proved to be a very suitable substitute and was produced in various African countries on a rather large scale (El Diario, 23-9-91, p. 6). Of decisive importance, however, for the decline of the tannin industries in the Gran Chaco was the fact that although the *quebracho colorado* resources were not yet completely exhausted, the tree was becoming scarce. The processing plants had become dependent on distant raw materials, for within a radius of at least 150 kilometres *quebracho* resources had largely disappeared. The costs of transporting the wood to the factories had risen immensely and lots of companies decided to shut them down. The tannin factory in Formosa, which nowadays is still producing the extract, is logging the *quebracho* at a distance of 200 kilometres. The transport of the logs by truck weighs heavily upon the financial balance of the enterprise.

In summary, it may be said that the tannin industries have played a pioneering role in the process of colonization in the Gran Chaco. The area, which had been an almost impenetrable Indian territory for centuries, has been opened up for exploitation and occupation. The

production of tannin has induced the construction of roads, railways and river ports. Rapidly growing settlements have arisen to house the tannin labourers and a considerable amount of land has been sold to private owners. Immigration set in and capital investments in the region increased. With these changes, the Gran Chaco was on its way to incorporation.

2.4 Livestock breeding

From the end of the 19th century cattle ranchers began to show interest in the extensive Gran Chaco. At that time, ranches had already been established in the Argentinean Pampa and Eastern Paraguay on a large scale. In these areas, the demand for land had driven up its price and many livestock breeders and pioneers were searching for cheap and vast pasture lands. The Gran Chaco seemed to offer promising opportunities, especially because land was cheap.

The occupation of the area by cattle ranchers started from three directions (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 417). The first zone that was invaded by the ranchers was situated at the western side near cities like Salta, Santiago del Estero and San Miguel de Tucumán. Bolivian and Argentine stock breeders purchased state-owned land and drove their cattle into the bush.

Other ranchers used the opportunity to buy areas in the eastern part of the Paraguayan and Argentine Gran Chaco that had been recently cleared by the tannin industries (Bünstorf, 1971c, p. 198). As soon as the *quebracho colorado* had been logged in a region, the tannin companies lost interest in the land and often were inclined to get rid of it at a low price. Along the Paraguay river a wide strip of about a hundred kilometres was occupied by ranches. Some tannin companies did not sell the cleared land but started their own ranches in these zones. Contrary to the cattle in the western Chaco that lived more or less in the bush, the herds on the ranches in the eastern region grazed on neat, largely cleared pastures.

The last group of ranchers that entered the Gran Chaco came from the south. Coming from Paraná and surroundings they occupied the banks of the Salado river and Dulce river. Like the cattle farmers near the Paraguay river, they had the advantage of a reliable and cheap mode of transportation, and, moreover, fresh water for their cattle was close at hand.

Most livestock activities in the Argentine Gran Chaco were started on a small scale. In the western parts of the Argentine Chaco for instance, *Criollo* families started stock farming in a more or less traditional way where the cattle were turned loose in a large, unfenced area of bushland. Livestock was often combined with some form of crop farming and production principally met family needs (Bartolomé, 1972, p. 3). With time, however, the ranches expanded and began to produce for the market (Bünstorf, 1982, p. 30). Of course, with the expansion of the herd, more land was needed.

In the eastern part of the Argentine Gran Chaco and in fact in the complete Paraguayan Chaco, the ranches were much bigger. Land was often purchased in large areas and the average *estancia* measured some 10-20,000 hectares. In general, the land was used very extensively, several hundred cows were kept on thousands of hectares. *Latifundismo*, a mode of production that can be characterized by an extreme extensiveness of capital, labour and land use, was, and in fact still is, mainly concentrated in the eastern Chaco.

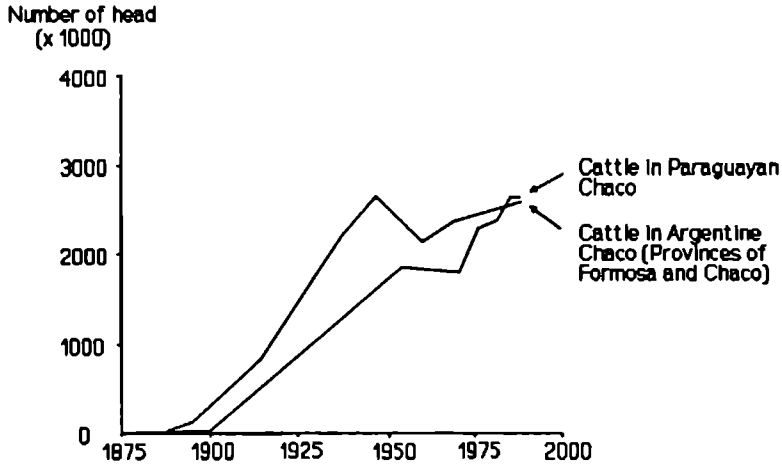


Figure 2.2 Development of cattle herds in the Gran Chaco (1886-1991) (Bünstorf, 1971b; INEC, 1991; Kleinpenning, 1984a; MAG, 1986 and 1991; Randle, 1981b)

It appears from figure 2.2 that the livestock sector in the Paraguayan and Argentine Chaco has undergone a steady increase during the past

hundred years and that to this day this growth continues. The current stock of cattle is bigger than ever before. Given the fact that the number of head per hectare cannot increase significantly because of environmental constraints, (that is, unless large investments are made in pasture improvement and irrigation) the growth of the herd resulted in an expansion of pasture land.

The expansion of livestock production in the Gran Chaco was supported by several events. The first impulse given to the cattle breeding sector, especially that of the Argentine Chaco, was the improved technology of preservation that guaranteed the transport of unspoiled meat to Europe and the United States. During the first decades of the 20th century, cold-storage warehouses were constructed in major cities and near seaports. The ranchers could now drive the cattle to the slaughterhouses and the meat could be cooled immediately. Experiments proved that the cooled meat was of much better quality than meat that had been frozen in the way it was earlier. Because of the cold-storage buildings, the export increased rapidly (van Balen, 1937, p. 60).

Another important event with respect to the livestock sector in the Gran Chaco was the arrival of a large number of Mennonite settlers in the central part of the Paraguayan Chaco. The Mennonites, a strongly religious people, immigrated to Paraguay in the 1920s and '30s and hoped to find an isolated, peaceful place to live in the Gran Chaco. The first group arrived in 1927 and founded Colonia Menno. Later, two more colonies were established; Fernheim in 1931 and Neuland in 1948. The Mennonites were colonists in the literal sense of the word, they opened up large areas of bushland and cultivated it (see also chapter 7).

At the beginning of the settlement, the Mennonites occupied some 150,370 hectares of land. In the course of time, they purchased more land which is represented in table 2.2.

Besides crop farming, the Mennonites have always been highly engaged in livestock. In addition to the production of meat, they are involved in dairy industries like the production of milk, cheese and butter. In 1990, the three Mennonite colonies together kept 377,432 head of cattle (which was about 15% of the Paraguayan Chaco herd) and had laid out 386,825 hectares of artificial pasture.[3]

[3] Information obtained from the *Administración de Contabilidad*, Filadelfia, Fernheim, in January 1992.

Table 2.2 Mennonite landownership in the Paraguayan Chaco (1927-1989)

Year	Land (ha.)
begin of settlement (1927/1931/1948)	150,370
1957	806,250
1974	910,536
1980	917,286
1989	1,024,285

(Hack, 1983, p. 104; ibid, 1991, p. 18)

Improvements in the infrastructure caused a further increase of livestock production (Comisión Nacional, 1983, p. 88). Most important in this respect is the Trans-Chaco highway. The construction of this road, leading from Asunción all the way to the Bolivian Chaco, was started in 1956. Nowadays, a five hour trip will take you from Asunción to Filadelfia, the centre of the Mennonite colonies, a distance of some 450 kilometres. The Trans-Chaco highway is of major importance to the Mennonites and other cattle farmers in the Paraguayan Chaco, for now the cattle can be transported by truck and sold at the market without delay. Since the completion of the Trans-Chaco road in 1962, the agricultural economy in the central part of the Paraguayan Chaco has changed substantially. In 1957, beef and dairy products accounted for only 25% of the total gross income of the Mennonite Colonies, while in 1972, cattle raising was responsible for no less than 60% of the colony's production. Of course also other developments like the increase in world beef prices in the 1960s, and the decrease of cotton production over the years, have contributed to this remarkable growth (Hecht, 1974, p. 10). In the Argentine Chaco, the construction of roads had more or less the same effect (see also section 2.8).

Finally, two technological changes allowed the livestock sector to increase drastically. Natural pastures in the Gran Chaco are poor and vulnerable. The lack of rainfall leaves them denuded during winters and overgrazing may lead to desertification in some places. To improve the pastures, some new grasses have been introduced in the area, grasses that are stronger and adjusted to the salty soil (Comisión Nacional, 1983, p. 88). Grasses used to improve pastures are the *costal bermuda*, the *estrella*, the *panicum coloratum* and the *pangola* in the eastern Chaco while the *salinas* grass is very popular in more salty regions in the centre and in the west (MAG, 1973, p. 138).

Another technological improvement that caused an augmentation

of the livestock was the introduction of carefully bred cattle that were perfectly adjusted to the environmental conditions in the region. The *criollo chaqueño* is the most widely spread. This race is a hybrid of the *criollo*, the original cow introduced by the Spaniards in colonial days, and some English stocks like the *Hereford*, the *Sussex*, the *Devon* and the *Shorthorn*. The *criollo chaqueño* is very strong, big enough to wander about through the bramble bushes and able to resist some contagious diseases. In the more favourable regions in the east, some breeds with a higher output like the *Nellore* and the *Brahman* are raised (MAG, 1973, p. 10).

In spite of the fact that cattle raising activities increased substantially throughout the years, the natural environment of the Gran Chaco provided some major constraints to the expansion of this economic sector.

Precipitation in the area is low and poorly spread over the year. Winters are characterized by long-lasting drought and consequently natural pastures are meagre from June to September. Heavy rainfall during summer causes the rivers to flood from time to time which is inevitably followed by the loss of cattle. Surface water is scarce apart from some lakes and swamps in the *Chaco Bajo*, and ground water is often brackish and therefore undrinkable.[4] Insects play a major role in the spreading of all kinds of cattle diseases.

Another problem that affected the cattle farmers during the first years of settlement was the indigenous population. Conflicts over land and water between the farmers and the Indians arose almost from the first contact. Cattle were stolen and eaten by the Indians and sometimes the ranches and "white villages" were raided by the Chaco tribes (Métraux, 1946, p. 204).

In conclusion, the expansion of the livestock in the Gran Chaco from about 1900 onwards, has had an substantial impact on the economic, spatial and ecological situation in the area. The raising of cattle as well as the occupation of pasturable land increased rapidly throughout the years. Deforestation has advanced in order to open up new areas for the livestock. Desertification as a consequence of overbrowsing of the vulnerable pastures, has increased in several dry regions in the west.

---

[4] Most ranchers in the Gran Chaco dig so-called *tajamares*; small reservoirs to store rainwater.

Cattle ranches are usually large, for example in 1981, 90% of the Paraguayan Chaco herd was kept on *estancias* larger than 1,000 hectares (Kleinpenning, 1984a, p. 32). Livestock in the Gran Chaco is also very unevenly spread over the area. In 1987 for instance, 80% of the cattle in the Paraguayan Chaco was raised in the department Presidente Hayes (MAG, 1988), while in Argentina the livestock is mainly concentrated in the western parts.

Land use for livestock in the Gran Chaco has always been extremely extensive. Often about three to eight hectares were available per head. In fact, large areas were hardly used at all. For the Indian population this was a relatively favourable situation for they could traverse the areas or sometimes settle down for a limited period of time without even being noticed by the owner.

Recently, however, the prices of land in the Gran Chaco have been increasing and there is a tendency to intensify the production and the land use. With the introduction of leys, the construction of fences and the improvement of the water supply for the cattle, the *estancieros* aim to fully exploit the potential of their property. Therefore, conflicts over the Indian settlement on these private areas, often resulting in the expulsion of these "illegal squatters", have recently become more and more common. Indian access to these privately owned areas is likely to become even more troublesome in the near future.

2.5 Agriculture

In this section I pay attention to the agricultural sector, which is a third aspect of economic and territorial incorporation. Looked upon from the view-point of production, agriculture, in comparison with the breeding of livestock and the extraction of tannin, probably played only a modest role in the process of incorporation. In the field of population growth and inter-regional migrations, however, the role of agricultural production is highly significant. Agricultural production is relatively labour intensive in character and therefore the increase of crop farming in the Gran Chaco induced large numbers of labourers and colonists to settle down in the area. A detailed description of the situation relating to the agricultural production is therefore justified in all respects.

During centuries of economic development and colonization in both Paraguay and Argentina, nobody had ever thought of the Gran Chaco as

a region with agricultural potential. Extremely high temperatures, the lack of rainfall which is also poorly spread over the year, and an indigenous population which was said to be hostile to intruders, disheartened every effort to establish agriculture in the region. Furthermore, there was an almost complete absence of infrastructure, skilled labour and service centres. For years, farming remained concentrated in the already colonized parts of Paraguay and Argentina.

At the end of the 19th century there was a modest increase of agricultural activity in the Gran Chaco. This expansion became more substantial in the course of time. Roughly delineated, the increase of agricultural production was due to developments or events in three different areas in the Gran Chaco. In this section, I deal with these areas separately.

The cultivation of sugar cane

The first impulse given to the agricultural sector in the Gran Chaco was the rise of the sugar cane production in the north-western part of Argentina. The cultivation of sugar cane on the slopes of the *Cordillera* in fact dates back to the 16th century, although the production at that time took place on a very small scale. With the construction of the railway from Tucumán to Buenos Aires in 1876, however, investment in the sugar cane factories, the so-called *ingenios*, expanded abruptly and consequently production increased (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 233).

Nowadays, the cultivation of sugar cane is still concentrated in the Argentine provinces Tucumán, Salta and Jujuy, although less significant centres have arisen in Las Palmas in the Argentine province of Formosa, and in Villa Hayes and Benjamín Aceval in the Paraguayan department of Presidente Hayes.

In Tucumán, sugar cane is produced in a somewhat traditional manner. Thousands of peasants cultivate the crop on small, individual plots and employ mainly family labour. In Salta and Jujuy the cultivation of sugar started somewhat later and was initiated by large companies that took control of production. Currently, five major companies dominate sugar production in these two provinces (CEPA, 1984, p. 7). With their large estates and private sugar mills, these five companies have been able to gain control over an increasing proportion of Argentine sugar production (Whiteford and Adams, 1975, p. 181).

The cultivation of sugar cane in Tucumán has never employed much foreign labour since the production takes place on a small scale,

but as soon as the large companies in Salta and Jujuy started to expand, a shortage of labour arose. Since the 1930s, an increasing number of employees have been recruited during the *zafra* (the sugar harvest) in the *ingenios* in Salta and Jujuy (Santamaría, 1986, p. 358).

Since the 1930s, Indians from all parts of the Chaco have participated in the production of sugar in north-western Argentina. Because the need for labour in the *ingenios* was of a seasonal character and in fact restricted to four or five months a year, an immense labour force migrated every year to the provinces of Salta and Jujuy and to a lesser extent to Tucumán. Wilhelmy and Rohmeder (1963, p. 236) estimate that some 10,000 Indians from the Gran Chaco worked as labourers in the *zafra* and more or less the same number is given by Whiteford and Adams (1975, p. 181) and by Santamaría (1986, p. 362). Mataco, Chorote, Pilagá, Chiriguano, Chulupí and even Toba and Mocoví from the far side of the Gran Chaco region, traversed the area to find employment. As in the tannin factories and on the cattle ranches, working conditions in the sugar mills have always been extremely unfavourable for the Indians. Low wages, insecurity with respect to work continuity and payment in liquor which was abundantly available as it was made from sugar, were unfortunately rather the rule than the exception (Isabello de Onis, 1986, p. 62).

Not only Indians worked as labourers in the sugar cane harvest as the *ingenios* offered employment to over 50,000 people. Bartolomé (1972, p. 221) even estimates the total employment on the sugar plantations of Salta and Jujuy at 150,000 workers a year, a figure which seems, however, somewhat overestimated. A large portion of these seasonal labourers were Bolivians and Argentines from provinces like Santiago del Estero and Catamarca who competed with the Indians for the better jobs. In the course of time, more and more of these migrants settled down in north-west Argentina permanently, trying to obtain a plot of land and start their own farm.

The large and cheap labour force that has always been available in the area, facilitated the continuation of labour intensive modes of sugar production (Santamaría, 1986, p. 358). Mechanization has never been profitable and consequently today thousands of labourers are still engaged in the harvest from May to September.

Now the production of sugar cane in the provinces of Tucumán, Salta and Jujuy, as well as the area involved in the cultivation of the crop, have more or less stabilized.

In summary, the large scale production of sugar cane in north-western Argentina is of twofold significance. On the one hand employment in the *ingenios* has resulted in permanent contact between Indian labourers and non-Indian labourers, and between different Indian tribes. Obviously, this contact has induced some radical cultural and social changes for Indian economy and society. On the other hand, large numbers of Bolivian and Argentine labourers settled down in the fringe areas of the Gran Chaco. Because of this gradual occupation of the land, the Indians were once again confronted with ever decreasing territory.

Cotton

Another important event that induced the expansion of agricultural activity in the Gran Chaco was the fact that in 1891 experiments in the cultivation of cotton in the Argentine part of the area indicated auspicious prospects. Cotton seemed to be resistant to the dry, hot weather, and could also withstand the few frosty nights that characterize winter in the Gran Chaco. In other words, cotton seemed to be perfect for the area's development.

Not until after World War I did the potentialities of the impenetrable Gran Chaco as a greenhouse for cotton become widely known in Argentina. Farmers, especially those from the Pampa region who had recently lost their land or could not survive economically, were sensitive to the optimistic prospects which were promised. Also, a large group of immigrants from Spain, Italy and other European countries were highly interested in the barren lands of the Gran Chaco. Many of these immigrants had in fact left Europe to start their own farm in the "New World", but had stopped in Buenos Aires or some other large city in Argentina (Scobie, 1964, p. 21).

From 1910 up to 1930 a considerable number of colonists arrived in the Gran Chaco aiming to purchase a piece of land and start cultivating cotton. The most popular region in this respect was within the triangle formed by Resistencia, Castelli and Villa Angela. Here, soil and climatic conditions were the most favourable and, moreover, this area was accessible by railway which was not the case with many other regions in the Gran Chaco. Land could easily be purchased in those first years of colonization as it was nearly all owned by the Argentine government which was willing to sell it at low prices. Occupation of land without legal title-deed was moreover generally tolerated by the authorities. Obviously it was in the Argentine government's interest that the resources of the Gran Chaco were finally being exploited. The

government stimulated the migration of settlers to the cotton area and even actively guided colonization by co-ordinating settlement and dividing plots equally between the farmers. Of course, a considerable proportion of the colonists did not participate in the colonization programme but simply settled where they thought it appropriate.

In 1921 the government began establishing several agricultural colonies which were supposed to increase the area's production of cotton. Some fourteen colonies were established, together covering an area of some 780,300 hectares (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 419). Under military guidance, land was given away or sold and every colonist family had access to a plot of 25 to 100 hectares of arable land, the so-called *chacra*. In six years, an extensive area in the province of Chaco was occupied and brought under cultivation, and the production of cotton in the region underwent a drastic growth. Iñigo Carrera reported at great length about these *chacras*;

> "The result of the policy of land division and colonization was the revival of the *chacra* as the dominant production unit in the Chaco and especially in the cotton region. The *chacra* is characterized by the fact that the title holders are not able to accumulate sufficient capital in order to free themselves from physical labour. Therefore at the *chacra*, they combine the labour of the owner and his family and of the wage-worker and his family" (Iñigo Carrera, 1983, p. 77-8) (translation by the author).

The reason why the cultivation of cotton in the province of Chaco underwent such drastic growth is that public land was still available. In other provinces, apart from Formosa, large areas had already passed into private hands and the owners on the whole were not keen on selling their land since prices were going up and speculation was a lucrative business.

In the 1930s and 1940s, cotton farmers were successful. Land prices and labour costs were low and the fact that the *peso* was devaluating improved the opportunities for export. Moreover, an important advantage for the Argentinean cotton farmers in this period was that in the United States, cotton cultivation decreased drastically allowing South American countries to increase their production of cotton for the world-market. Cities like Resistencia and Reconquista expanded rapidly as trading activities increased. The infrastructure was improved to facilitate the transport of tradesmen, farmers and of course the cotton itself. Bünstorf (1976, pp. 144-7) points out that above all railways,

partially constructed by the tannin companies, have played a crucial role in opening up the area. Finally, the national demand for cotton also increased and the number of weaving mills in the country grew from the 1930s resulting in a powerful textile industry that is still found in modern Argentina.

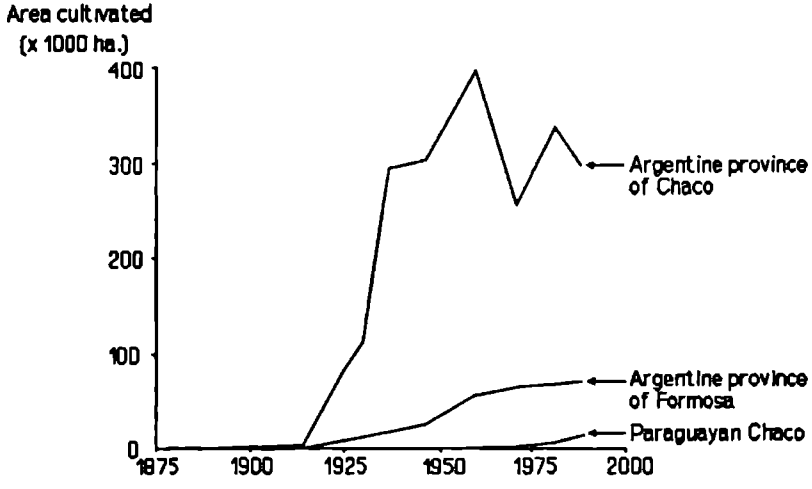


Figure 2.3 Area cultivated with cotton (1894-1991) (Borello, 1988; Carrera, 1981; INEC, 1989; MAG, 1986 and 1986; Randle, 1981b)

Figure 2.3 illustrates clearly that the area under cultivation has increased substantially over the years. The 1930s and 1940s especially were characterized by an expansion of cotton production.

The rise of cotton production in the Gran Chaco was largely due to an increase of the cultivated area. In other words, cotton production per hectare has scarcely increased. In the 1960s, the growth in cotton production saturated and it became clear that the expectations of the Gran Chaco becoming a large cotton producing region had been set too high.

On the whole, this is not surprising when the unfavourable natural conditions for cotton cultivation in this region are taken into account. The unreliability of the Gran Chaco's climate is most relevant to these somewhat disappointing results. Frost too often or too early in the year

damages the cotton, and rainfall at harvest time may have disastrous consequences. Grasshopper plagues are frequent and can destroy the complete crop (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 422).

On top of these rather unfavourable natural conditions, the farmers have been confronted with declining cotton prices on the world-market since the 1950s. Finally, the ever continuing dependence on manual labour caused high costs as the cultivation of cotton is labour intensive. As a consequence of these disadvantages, many farmers got into difficulties. Some changed from cotton to other crops, some even switched to livestock.

However, cotton production has not disappeared. Currently there is still a significantly large number of small *chacras* in the Argentine province of Chaco, and cotton farms have also been established in the province of Formosa. In Formosa, the land occupation started somewhat later and cotton cultivation is partially the work of Paraguayans who have emigrated to Argentina. In western Paraguay, the cultivation of cotton is of virtually no significance and in fact mainly concentrated in the Mennonite colonies.

Retrospectively it is clear that the optimistic expectations for the cultivation of cotton in the Gran Chaco were overstated. The increase of production as well as the area involved have now stabilized and results stay behind the prognoses. Climatic conditions frustrate uncomplicated methods of cultivation and harvesting. Nevertheless, cotton cultivation has enormously stimulated population growth in the region. The province of Chaco for instance, in 1915 had only around 46,000 inhabitants. By 1933 the population had already risen to 214,160 while in 1964 no less than 430,555 people were living in the province (Altamirano et al., 1987, pp. 189 and 232; Statistisches Bundesamt, 1988). The vast majority of these people was engaged in the cultivation of cotton. To this day, cotton still is the most important cash crop in the Gran Chaco.

Crop farming in the Mennonite colonies

The third concentration of crop farming is located in the central part of the Paraguayan Chaco. In the 1920s Mennonite pioneers were searching the world for a place to settle down. Driven from Canada and the Soviet Union, they became interested in the remote Chaco where they hoped to find a place to settle and to build an existence in isolation. The fact that the Paraguayan government literally invited them and created favourable conditions for their settlement, tipped the scale.

The first group of Mennonites settled in Paraguay in 1927. The land which they purchased had belonged to the Argentine Casado family. In 1931 and 1948 two more groups of Mennonites arrived. The area occupied by the Mennonites had originally been the territory of the Lengua Indians. The Mennonites aimed to colonize the area by producing livestock and by crop farming. Initially they tried cultivating wheat but this met with only limited results. By 1934 they had already switched to cotton after Kempski, who at that time was the director of the agrarian experimental station of the Casado company, had predicted its profitability. In 1931 he wrote:

> "The climate and soil in the Paraguayan Chaco are perfectly suited to the cultivation of cotton. Populated by thousands of settlers with a quiver full of children, these areas could, in the near future, compete seriously with the famous cotton growing regions in North America, which today account for some 60% of the global cotton production" (Kempski, 1931, p. 37) (translation by the author).

The production of cotton in the colonies increased substantially. In time, the Mennonites also began to produce other crops like peanuts and castor seeds for the market, sorghum and maize as cattle forage, and beans, sweet potatoes and manioc for their own consumption. Table 2.3 sketches the development of crop farming in the three Mennonite colonies. The table clearly illustrates that the share of cotton production in arable land use has decreased over the years, from 54% in 1930 to 20% in 1990. In 1990, 69% of the arable land in the three colonies was cultivated with castor seeds and sorghum.

Table 2.3 Crop farming in the Mennonite colonies (1930-1990)

Crop	1930	1956	1982	1990
Cotton (ha.)	2,200	4,313	5,655	5,543
Peanuts (ha.)	350	1,583	20,684	15,818
Castor seeds (ha.)	-	-	3,881	2,838
Sorghum (ha.)	200	3,843	3,563	1,613
Other crops / fallow land (ha.)	1,350	4,791	?	1,302
Total (ha.)	4,100	14,530	>33,983	27,114

(Administración de Contabilidad de Filadelfia, 1992; Hack, 1961, pp. 114-23; Kleinpenning, 1984a, p. 53)

In the course of time, the share of crop farming of the total gross domestic product of the Mennonite colonies has decreased. Hecht (1974, p. 10) explains this trend by pointing out that the completion of the Trans-Chaco highway led to an extension in livestock production, which of course largely depends on transport facilities. The increase of livestock production was mainly at the expense of cotton cultivation. In the late 1950s, crop farming accounted for 65% of the colonies' gross domestic income, while in 1972, the income from cash crops had decreased to approximately 25% (Hack, 1961, p. 92; Hecht, 1974, p. 11).

The present-day influence of the Mennonites on the spatial situation in the central part of the Paraguayan Chaco is not so much due to their crop farming activities in their colonies, but much more to cattle farming. Crop farming only accounts for a tiny proportion of the land occupied by the Mennonites.

Besides the occupation of land in the Gran Chaco, the Mennonites also play a crucial role for the Indian people in the region as employers. Currently some 12,000 Indians of several tribes live in or near the three colonies. Some of the Indians have already settled on land given to them by the Mennonites, while others are still dependent upon temporary paid work. During the fifty to sixty years that Mennonites and Indians have been in contact with each other, far-reaching labour relations have arisen.

Other crops

Apart from these three centres, agricultural activities are found sporadically all over the Gran Chaco. The cultivation of various kinds of fruit, for example, is widely spread over the area and sunflowers, maize and cereals also appear in several places (IIEF, 1968, p. 89). The increasing application of irrigation and draining, especially in the Argentine Chaco, has led to the cultivation of more water-hungry crops like rice and tomatoes. Up to the present, cultivation of these crops has taken place on a very small scale.

Worth mentioning in this respect is also the cultivation of *jojoba* (*simmondisa chimensis*) in the Paraguayan department of Nueva Asunción. Experiments with this particular crop, which can be used for various industrial purposes and as a substitute for mineral fuels, started in 1978. Expectations were high as the physical conditions in the Gran Chaco seemed to perfectly fit the characteristics of *jojoba*. In 1983 it was estimated that within four years, the area cultivated with *jojoba* in

the Paraguayan Chaco would amount to some 24,000 hectares. Given the fact that in 1990, no more than 2,678 hectares were planted with *jojoba*, it can be safely stated that the prognoses dating from the '80s were grossly exaggerated (Kleinpenning, 1984a, pp. 85-6; Última Hora, 21-6-90, pp. 4-5).

After briefly going into crop farming activities in the Gran Chaco over the past hundred years, two main conclusions come clearly to the fore.

The first is that crop farming in the Gran Chaco is of little significance. Compared with the other economic activities in the area, production as well as area involved are limited. I have already mentioned some reasons such as the unfavourable natural conditions, the poor infrastructure and the lack of a local market. Another important explanation for the backwardness of the area is that sufficient reasonably priced, fertile land is still available in other parts of Paraguay and Argentina. Nevertheless, given the fact that the colonization process in Eastern Paraguay and the Pampa is making fast progress, it is likely that in the near future farming in the area is going to increase. For the time being, however, population growth is the most substantial result of agriculture in the region.

The second conclusion should be that while crop farming is of little significance in the whole region, in Paraguay it is even less developed than in Argentina. In 1989, only 60,874 hectares had been cultivated with crops in the Paraguayan Chaco. No less than 97% of this area, moreover, was concentrated in the departments of Boquerón and Villa Hayes (MAG, 1990, pp. 7-80). One year earlier, in 1988, crop farming in the Argentine provinces of Chaco and Formosa accounted for 1,086,000 hectares (Instituto Geográfico Militar, 1989, pp. 37 and 42). The main reasons for this concentration of agricultural activities are the natural conditions which are somewhat more favourable in Argentina and the more developed infrastructure which facilitates transport.

2.6 Missions

As was briefly mentioned in the second section of this chapter, the process of incorporation is not characterized by economic aspects only, but also by cultural and social changes. In this respect, missionaries have played a crucial role in the cultural changes that have taken and are taking place in the Gran Chaco. Over the course of many decades,

Christian Churches of different disciplines have felt the need to preach the gospel to the pagan Indians who were unfamiliar with Christian beliefs. The missionaries have brought with them the Christian faith and a new morality. Nowadays, in several regions and among several Indian tribes of the Gran Chaco, Christianity has become the dominant spiritual and social movement. Evangelization therefore, can certainly be described in terms of cultural or social incorporation.

Evangelization in the Gran Chaco had already begun by the end of the 16th century. Hand in hand with the military subjection of many Indian groups, Jesuits and somewhat later Franciscans carried out the *conquista espiritual.*

Although the efforts of these early missionaries were mainly concentrated on the sedentary Guaraní tribes in present-day eastern Paraguay, Corrientes and Misiones, they also established some missionary outposts in the interior of the Gran Chaco. During these early years of Christianity in the New World, the Jesuits and Franciscans had contact mainly with the Guaycurú Indians and with some Zamuco communities (Prien, 1978, p. 269). The results of these initial efforts to preach the gospel among the Gran Chaco Indians were on the whole poor. The missionaries had the greatest of difficulties in tracing the Indians who were constantly on the move. Once the missionaries had found the Indians, the latter were often hostile and would sometimes even kill them. In 1632, for instance, a number of missionary posts along the Río Bermejo were totally destroyed during the Indian attacks (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 416).

Apart from these more or less sporadic missionary activities in the area, serious efforts to evangelize the Indians in the Gran Chaco, in fact, started no earlier than the end of the 19th century. In 1887 the South American Missionary Society began to work with the Paraguayan Chaco Indians (Métraux, 1946, p. 204). By far the most famous missionary among the Chaco tribes, was the English clergyman Wilfred Barbrooke Grubb. For twenty years, Grubb lived among the Lengua Indians in the lower Chaco. Surely for his time, but also compared with some missionaries in our days, Grubb was a progressive missionary who understood the necessity of tolerance when confronted with people of other religions. He was prepared to live with the Indians under scanty conditions and, fortunately for the interested readers, kept an accurate, almost scientific journal of his work and experiences. Thanks to Grubb, our knowledge of the history and culture of the Lengua Indians is much

more detailed than that of the other Chaco tribes. In the following quotation we can read what Grubb saw as the goal of missionary work:

> "Our task was first of all to make ourselves acquainted with the language, political constitution (such as it was), history, habits, customs, religious beliefs and the possible capacity of the people, to arrest the decline and decay of the race; to bind the various tribes together; to give them a system of government; to raise them to the level of property-holders; to induce them to adopt an industrious, settled and regular life; to instil into them a higher moral sense; to awaken a desire for culture and progress; to fit them to receive the offer of the Paraguayan government of citizenship in that republic; to make them useful members of society, a people who could bear their part in the development of their own land and to qualify them in every way to take their due place as a unit in the growing population of the continent. We realized that the only way in which we could succeed in doing so was by implanting in them a pure, living form of Christianity, which would become the basis of their political, social and moral constitution" (Grubb, 1925, p. 218).

In 1907, Grubb founded the Anglican mission station "Misión Central", also known by the Lengua name "Makthlawaiya", some seventy kilometres to the west of Concepción. More or less at the same time, the Franciscan congregation established three missions; Nueva Pompeya for the Mataco Indians and Tacaaglé and Laishí for the Toba. One could say that these first missions flourished economically as well as religiously. Often the missionaries kept some livestock for their own consumption and, with the help of Indian labour, kept gardens. Sometimes, the Indians were occupied with handicraft. In the course of time, more and more Indians arrived at the missions.

The fact that many Indian tribes at the beginning of this century seemed to be willing to accept the gospel and the paternalism of the missionaries, can be explained by the arrival of the colonists and military in the area. Conflicts had already resulted in casualties and many Indians had realized that resistance was useless. Especially during the military raids in the Argentinean Chaco (1875-1911) that were intended to subdue the indigenous population, many Indians took refuge in the missions.

In later years other European and American Churches sent missionaries to the Chaco and established missions in the interior. In the

1940s, for instance, the number of Protestant missions with the Toba Indians in northern Argentina increased while at the same time Mennonites started missionary work among the Nivaklé and Lengua Indians in the Paraguayan Chaco (Wright, 1987, p. 21). Nowadays the majority of the native population of the area has been converted to Christianity, or at least has been or still is in contact with the Catholic missions or one of the Protestant Churches.

The main reason for the missionaries in earlier times to endanger their lives by entering the impenetrable Gran Chaco with its hostile climate and inhabitants was "the divine mission of preaching the gospel to the heathens". The arrival of missionaries in the area and the contact which they had with the Indians actually resulted in some notable changes in Indian culture that had nothing to do with religion.

The missionaries in fact were the precursors of the capitalist penetration that was to follow shortly afterwards. Relations of reciprocity, which had been widely spread among the Indians, were being replaced by feelings of individuality and competence. The importance of labour, decent clothing, possession and savings was instilled into the Indians, while on the other hand various traditional customs and rituals were rejected as being sinful or unhealthy. The Indians were also persuaded to give up their aggressive resistance against the white settlers in the area.

The following letter written by a land-surveyor to the Paraguayan president of the day illustrates the fact that the Indians in the Gran Chaco were not only being converted by the missionaries but being pacified as well:

> "Villa Concepción, December 30, 1893
> To His Excellency the President of the Republic, Asunción
>
> Knowing the interest your Excellency takes in the welfare and advancement of the Chaco, I venture to inform you that I have this day returned from an expedition to its interior to survey and measure the boundaries for a mission station of the South American Missionary Society, from which, in future, its missionaries will work for the civilization and evangelisation of the Chaco Indians; and am surprised at the security and tranquillity with which we can now travel among them, thanks to the effective measures taken by the

> missionaries of the South American Missionary Society to christianise those savages. Today the spirit of hostility has entirely disappeared. I have made my present survey with Indian assistance, and not carried a single firearm. At night we slept tranquilly, at whatever spot our labour for the day had ceased, no watch being set, and several times in the vicinity of strange Indians whom we met on the road. We sought the villages instead of avoiding them as formerly...
>
> I remain, your Excellency's obedient servant;
>
> signed... Public land surveyor" (Grubb, 1925, p. 323).

The pacification of the Indians by the missionaries obviously served the interests of the Argentine and Paraguayan governments who were anxiously trying to open up the Gran Chaco for agriculture and livestock breeding. On several occasions, the governments openly stimulated missionary activities by inviting religious organizations, paying for the passage of the missionaries and offering them all kinds of favourable settling and tax incentives (Maybury-Lewis and Howe, 1980, p. 72; Regehr, 1979). Missions could be useful in pacifying the Indian population and settle them in neatly arranged areas where they could be controlled and eventually integrated into national society. For the government, the religious ideas and background of the missions were of secondary interest.

In the past few decades, missionary work in the Gran Chaco and in Latin America as a whole has undergone drastic changes.

Firstly, the attitude of the missionaries towards people of other religions has changed and in fact become more accepting. The early decades of religious penetration in the area were characterized by a strong paternalistic attitude from the missionaries towards the "pagans". In those days, they took little account of the cultural system and background of the Indians and, in fact, began with the assumption that the native population of the Gran Chaco had, until then, no religion at all. According to the missionaries, the Indians were, at least as far as religion was concerned, a *tabula rasa* which they could fill in at their own discretion. In fact, the majority of the missions preached the European or North American interpretation of Christianity. Few missionaries in those days realized that the acceptance of Christian beliefs by the Indian people would create a new Christianity, an Indian

interpretation of the gospel, a Christianity in which Indian symbols and elements have a place. The dogmatic and paternalistic attitude of the missions frustrated evangelization, since the Indians were often neither willing nor able to simply abandon their beliefs, which often have a tradition of hundreds, sometimes thousands of years. Consequently, the Christian faith often was not internally adopted by the Indians, they could speak and behave like Christians and at the same time continue to obey the rules of their traditional religion. A number of times, as soon as the missionaries set out to look for new "heathens" to convert, the Indian Christians returned to Shamanism and Animism and forgot all about Christ.

In the past, evangelization often went simultaneously with the instillment of some sort of pious behaviour. Apparently, baptizing the Indians and preaching the gospel was not enough, the Indians should also live and behave like Christians. Therefore various rituals and customs like for instance drinking alcoholic mead on special occasions, dancing during feasts, smoking leaves or grasses and fighting contests, were banned in the missions. Instead, a "decent" behaviour was imposed upon the Indians.

In the course of time, many missionary groups have left the one-way street of evangelization exclusively aimed at the baptism of "pagans", and have begun to value Indian culture and religion and an exchange of thoughts between the missionaries and the Indians. For some missionary Churches, this meant that dogmatism and paternalism were dropped, while on the other hand interest and dialogue increased. Of course not all the missionizing Churches were capable of making such drastic changes. In this respect it is noteworthy that generally speaking, the Catholic Church seems to take the lead whereas Protestantism as yet is tenaciously keeping to tradition.

The fact that a number of Churches in the Gran Chaco have recently changed their policy towards the Indians when it comes to the strategy of evangelization, has resulted in the emergence of various Indian Christian communities. Nowadays large numbers of Indians feel that Christianity has become an essential part of their culture and religion. Amongst the Toba, Mataco, Lengua and many others, we find religious movements that are strongly influenced either by Protestantism or by Catholicism, but nevertheless are undeniably indigenous. Messianistic elements are combined with Christian symbols and have created a new, Indian Christianity (Bartolomé, 1972, pp. 225-6).

Another important change within the missionizing Churches in the

Gran Chaco is the shifting of attention from a purely religious mission towards development aid. Preaching the gospel to people with an empty stomach and who can not even read or write is no longer viewed upon as the task of the Churches carrying the highest priority. Therefore, the majority of the missionaries in the Gran Chaco region are currently providing medical assistance, elementary education and some sort of economic training (Dorfman, 1988, p. 9). They aim to enable the Indians to become independent as far economic subsistence is concerned and moreover, to try to start a process of indigenous emancipation. More often than not, the Churches have taken initiatives to improve the difficult situation in which the Indians find themselves. There where government policy is conspicuous by its absence, the Churches are trying to fill the gap and support the Indian people (Stunnenberg, 1987, pp. 31-2).

Especially noteworthy in this respect are the efforts undertaken by several Churches in the 1960s and '70s, to purchase land for the Indian communities in the Gran Chaco. It was generally recognized that the loss of land meant a severe threat to the survival of the indigenous people and in order to facilitate them to regain economic and cultural strength, the Churches tried to retrocede parts of the lost territory. Hand in hand with these efforts to safeguard at least a small part of the Gran Chaco area for the indigenous people, the Churches often tried to teach the Indians modern methods of agriculture so that they could exploit the land once they had access to it. Large areas have been bought by the Churches and given to the Indians under usufruct conditions.

In the 1980s, policy changed. Paraguay and Argentina promulgated a number of indigenous laws that enabled the Indian communities to become legally recognized owners of the land they occupied. The procedures for the transference of land to the Indian communities, set out in the concerning laws, however, were complicated and demanded a detailed understanding of juridical matters. Currently, a number of Churches have made it their goal to support the Indians in claiming their land rights embedded in these indigenist laws. With respect to this support, differences between the various Churches nowadays working with the Indians are substantial.

Presently, the following Catholic and Protestant organizations are working with the Indian people in the Gran Chaco.

Salesians. The Catholic Salesian congregation originates from Italy and started to work with the Gran Chaco Indians around 1920. When Rome

founded the *Vicariato Apostólico del Chaco* in 1948, the Salesians began to work in the north-eastern part of the Paraguayan Chaco. Nowadays their efforts are directed mainly towards the Ayoreo Indians. The Salesians have some missionary stations along the Río Paraguay including the well-documented mission María Auxiliadora (Regehr, 1979, pp. 150-2).

Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The Catholic congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate is taking part in the *Vicariato Apostólico del Pilcomayo*, founded in 1925. When the Oblates came from Germany at the beginning of this century, they started a number of missions along the Río Pilcomayo where they contacted thousands of Nivaklé Indians. In later years they shifted their missionary activities towards the north and nowadays their influence reaches as far as the Mennonite colonies in the central part of the Paraguayan Chaco (Maybury-Lewis and Howe, 1980, p. 74; Redekop, 1973, p. 303).

Franciscans. The Catholic Franciscans have a long tradition in working with the Indian people in the Gran Chaco. As early as 1780 they had started the evangelization of some Toba and Mataco groups near the Pilcomayo river where they established several mission posts like Tacaaglé and Nueva Pompeya (Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 416). Currently the Franciscans are concentrating their activities on the Chiriguano Indians in the Argentine province of Salta and still have an important Toba mission in Tacaaglé (Bartolomé, 1972, pp. 225-6).

ENM and ENDEPA. During the past few decades, Catholic missionary organizations in Argentina and Paraguay have taken several initiatives to join forces and activities in their efforts to convert the indigenous people of both countries and help them with their socio-economic development. These initiatives have eventually resulted in the foundation of two Catholic organizations with respect to the missionary activities. In Paraguay, Catholic organizations have formed the *Equipo Nacional de Misiones* (ENM) while in Argentina the *Equipo Nacional de Pastoral Aborigen* (ENDEPA) operates as an umbrella organization. It seems to me that these organizations strongly improve the quality of support given to the Indians.

Anglicans. The Protestant Anglican Church of England sent her missionaries to the Gran Chaco at the end of the 19th century when the

famous W. Barbrooke Grubb and others started the evangelization of the Lengua Indians. Nowadays, the Anglican Church is working in Argentina as well as in Paraguay.

The Paraguayan programme related to the Indian people in the Gran Chaco began in 1974 under the name *La Herencia* (the inheritance). The team of *La Herencia* has since purchased three pieces of land (in addition to Makthlawaiya which had long been the property of the Anglican Church in Paraguay) where now Lengua, Sanapaná and Angaité Indians find a place to settle, and to work in the fields or with the cattle if they so choose.

In Argentina the Anglican Church has created the *Diócesis del Norte* in 1973 with its see in the city of Salta. Up to 1990, some seventy more or less independent Indian Churches have arisen within this diocese. Since 1976 there has been an Indian bishop for a see in Ingeniero Juárez. The activities of the Argentinean Anglican Church in relation to the Indian people are mainly concentrated in three centres; Ingeniero Juárez, La Paz and Misión Chaqueña or Algarrobal where in earlier days the Anglican clergymen were trained before being sent into the interior. Unfortunately for the Anglican Church, the war on account of the Malvinas (Falkland) islands in 1982, frustrated the relations between England and Argentina. The position of the missions declined substantially as a large number of Anglican missionaries were expelled from the country.

New Tribes Mission. The Protestant North American New Tribes Mission tries to contact, as its name indicates, Indian tribes that as yet, had little or no contact with the outside world. In 1955 they started to work in Makthlawaiya, the old Paraguayan mission near Concepción, which they took over for some years from the Anglicans. After that, they went to look for the Ayoreo Indians in the northern part of the Paraguayan Chaco, and persuaded a group to join the mission. Currently some 800 Ayoreo have settled in Campo Loro and are in continuous contact with the clergymen of the New Tribes Mission (von Bremen, 1987b, p. 80).

It is asserted by various sources that the orthodox, evangelical methods of evangelization are destroying indigenous cultural autonomy and that the mission serves only the interests of the imperialistic, capitalistic forces from the United States. Rumour or not, the position of the New Tribes Mission in the Paraguayan Chaco is at the least controversial.

One particular event seems to be of major importance to the continuous flow of criticism poured over the mission. In December 1986 an aeroplane of the New Tribes Mission spotted a group of Ayoreo that had never before been in contact with the mission. Aiming to convert these Indians as they had done with the other Ayoreo, the missionaries organized an expedition to bring the Indians out of the bush. Equipped with water, presents and bibles they set out to the spotted location where they left a group of converted Ayoreo while the missionaries themselves returned to Campo Loro. After three days the drama became clear. There had been a cruel fight between the converted and the non-converted Ayoreo resulting in five casualties among the non-converted Indians. The rest of the group was taken to Campo Loro and subdued to evangelization (Escobar, 1988, p. 17).

This is one version of the dramatic event. Norman Keefe, head of the New Tribes Mission in Campo Loro, assured me that the missionaries had tried everything they could to find the spotted group before the converted Ayoreo as they expected a conflict. "This conflict, however, had nothing to do with the New Tribes Mission", so he said, "the war between the two groups of Ayoreo dates back to a time long before the mission had even entered the area."[5] I am not in a position to judge the truthfulness of both versions as I was not there at the time.

Pentecostalists. Since 1941 the Protestant Pentecostal Church has been working with the Indian people of the Gran Chaco. The efforts of these evangelists started in the city of Resistencia and from there under the guidance of this Protestant denomination spread out over northern Argentina. The activities of the Pentecostalists are concentrated on the Toba Indians of which in 1983 some 3,600 had already been baptized (Wright, 1983, p. 81).

Mennonites. The Mennonites, also of Protestant faith, are an exceptional group among the Churches in the Gran Chaco. They did not arrive in Paraguay with the principal objective of converting the Indian people, but on the contrary were both refugees and colonists. They settled in the Gran Chaco not because they felt a missionary calling but because they needed a place where they could live in isolation and worship God in their fashion.

Almost immediately after their arrival in the Paraguayan Chaco,

---

[5] During a visit to Campo Loro in August 1990.

the Mennonites contacted the Indians in the region. In those days, no more than some 500 Lengua lived in the central Chaco. Shortly afterwards, however, more and more Lengua and also Nivaklé Indians chose to settle near the colonies in order to obtain jobs, medical assistance and maybe some consumer goods. In 1935 the Mennonites began a programme of evangelization under the name *Licht den Indianer*. In later years, this programme developed into an integral settlement project in which currently approximately 9,000 Indians take part.

Since 1943, Mennonite missionaries have also worked in the Argentine part of the Gran Chaco among the Toba Indians. Initially they established three missions; Nam Cum, Legua Diecisiete and Legua Quince (Wright, 1987, p. 23).

Iglesia Evangélica Unida (IEU). In response to the efforts of religious missions to evangelize the Indian people, several new and often local Churches have arisen in the region. By far the most important of these Churches is the *Iglesia Evangélica Unida*, in which mainly Toba Indians participate. In 1958, the IEU was recognized by the Argentine state as an independent Church of indigenous people (von Bremen, 1987a, pp. 25-7; Wallis, 1985, p. 12).

From the foregoing it has become clear that the arrival of several Christian denominations in the Gran Chaco has induced important changes in the culture and religion of the vast majority of the indigenous inhabitants living in this area. From about 1900 onwards a large number of missionaries have entered the Gran Chaco, made contact with the Indians and attempted to convert these people to Christianity.

The presence of the missions in the Gran Chaco has in fact had both positive and negative consequences for the Indian people.

On the one hand, the evangelization has disturbed and sometimes even aggressively destroyed Indian tradition and religion. The paternalistic and dogmatic attitude of the majority of the missions has resulted in a kind of "spiritual oppression" in which new values and standards, often of non-Indian and of purely western origin, were pressed on the Indian people. Following their ideas with respect to Christian faith and piety, most missionaries tried to extinguish the so-called "sinful" and "heathen" traditions and beliefs of the Indians. Evangelization practised along these lines, exhibits a disrespect for other people's religious persuasion and is responsible for the cultural and

religious incorporation of the Indian people of the Gran Chaco. Nowadays more than fifty percent of the Indians belong to, or are at least in contact with, a Christian community in the area.

On the other hand, in the past twenty to thirty years, it has become clear that the missionaries in the Gran Chaco have often done their utmost to alleviate the socio-economic problems which confront the Indian people today. Medical assistance, education, emancipative projects and, probably most importantly, support in claiming Indian land rights, are of crucial significance to the cultural and economic survival of the Indian people. Government policy is on the whole either lacking or prejudicial with respect to the Indians, and in fact the missionaries represent one of the few constructive influences in solving the problems of these people.

Unfortunately, the development aid provided by the Churches in the Gran Chaco is still being wasted by some kind of competition between the different religious groups. Solid co-operation between the Churches now working with the Indian tribes would be of incalculable value in the fight against the economic forces which are becoming stronger and stronger. Recently however, some progress has been made. Efforts like the Catholic organizations ENM and ENDEPA are a step in the right direction, and will possibly advance to a coherent, integral programme to support the Indians. After all, the missions probably have the most dedicated, motivated and skilled employees who now have considerable experience in supporting the Indian people.

2.7 Military forces

Although the Gran Chaco has never been a major source of raw materials or economically important in any other way, the effect of the military in the area has always been significant. The fact that the Gran Chaco has been, and still is, a largely unoccupied region and moreover, that the area stretches out over three nations probably explains this military activity. Nobody knew exactly what the economic potential of the region was going to be and therefore, every nation ensured that its territory was defended. In the past, when international borders in the Gran Chaco had not yet been permanently delineated, they were often under dispute. These conflicts have increased military activity in the area.

The presence of the military in the Paraguayan and Argentinean

Gran Chaco did not, in contrast to the presence of economic factors such as the extraction of timber and tannin, farmers and cattle ranchers, result in the direct occupation of extensive parts of the Indian territories. The presence of the military did, however, incorporate the Gran Chaco in a more political sense. Today the military forces control international traffic and migration, they defend national territory against possible foreign threats and finally they enforce the law, even in the most remote parts of the country.

From 1875, the starting-point of modern development in the Gran Chaco, roughly two periods of increased military activity in the area can be distinguished.

The first period stretches from 1875 to 1911 when a number of military campaigns took place in the Argentinean part of the Gran Chaco. In 1879, Argentina's Minister of War, Julio A. Roca, began a large scale offensive against the indigenous people of the country "who still controlled vast territories of the republic" (Dorfman, 1988, p. 2). Roca considered it necessary to open up "barren" parts of the national territory in order to bring these areas under cultivation and to exploit the valuable trees that were growing there.

Initially, attention was focused on the Pampa region where profitable exploitation was to be expected. A military campaign under the euphemistic name of *La Campaña del Desierto* was started and caused the death or flight of thousands of Indians. Complete Indian tribes were wiped out during this operation in the Pampa (see e.g. Bünstorf, 1991, p. 380; Portas, 1967).

Some years later, in 1884, maybe because *La Campaña del Desierto* had been such a "success", a similar campaign was launched in the Gran Chaco (Dorfman, 1988, p. 2). Julio Roca had become President and his Minister of War, Dr. Benjamín Victoria was charged with the guidance of the new military operation. Simultaneously with the military campaign, the government promulgated a law that would facilitate the settlement of colonists in the north of Argentina. Once the area was secured by the army, settlers would be able to start their farms (Iñigo Carrera, 1982, p. 13).

The campaign was only partially successful. The military defeated most Indian tribes but Indian resistance to the oppression continued. Additionally, some fifty percent of the area that was opened up fell into the hands of several major speculators who did not exploit the land but patiently waited for prices to go up (Ubertalli, 1987, p. 36). On later

occasions, further campaigns were launched to "finish the job". Many fortresses were constructed, especially on the banks of the rivers, and hundreds of soldiers were stationed in the area permanently. Finally in 1911 the military campaign in the Argentine Gran Chaco came to an end; the mission had been accomplished (Iñigo Carrera, 1982, p. 19; Isabello de Onis, 1986, p. 56).

With respect to the objectives of these military campaigns against the indigenous population in Argentina, Lieutenant Colonel Rostagno, commander of the 1911 campaign, wrote the following:

> "The first (goal) is to occupy our frontier with Paraguay and Bolivia, so that the already established colonies and the future settlements on the right bank of the Pilcomayo can prosper tranquilly, trusting on the vigilance and protection of the ever present national forces, to repulse every attack of the rebellious warrior tribes and to protect them against the groups of brigands who live in and plunder the adjacent regions of this river, both in our country and in our neighbouring country.
>
> The second is to hand this immense region of bushland discussed above over to the progressive forces of our agricultural population, as well as to the Indian (population), who wishes to be subdued and work under the authority of the colonist or the Minister of Agriculture".

Elsewhere he added:

> "... that we will not harass anybody who wants to work, and that as a consequence, they (the Indians) do not have to flee from the troops, but on the contrary, should approach them, express their wishes and needs and wait trustfully for our cordial reception and also the proper solution that the government has to their requests" (Iñigo Carrera, 1983, pp. 55-7) (translation by the author).

In this quotation the goals of the military campaigns are clearly seen. Above all, the campaigns served the interests of the colonists who already lived in the Gran Chaco and those who were still to come and settle in this barren region. The military were to see to it that the pioneers could fully concentrate on agricultural production, undisturbed by any outside threat whatsoever. The protection of the colonists and their families was guaranteed.

The military were not only to pacify the indigenous inhabitants of the region in order to safeguard the colonists against violent attacks and theft of their cattle, they also tried to incorporate the Indians as

labourers in the developing economy of the region. Some Indians were forced to settle down in the so-called *reducciones*, villages where the Indian labour force was kept. Another strategy of the military was to block Indian passage to the Bermejo river and the Pilcomayo river and to their hunting territories (Iñigo Carrera, 1982, p. 15). Once fishing and hunting had become impossible, the Indians had no other option than to beg the white colonists or the sugar mills in north-western Argentina for paid work. The Indian labour force was mobilized on a large scale and this "indigenous proletariat" played a crucial role in the capitalist expansion in the Gran Chaco (Iñigo Carrera, 1981, p. 242).

The second period of intensive military activity in the Gran Chaco came to a head in 1932 when war broke out between Paraguay and Bolivia. Fifty years of disputes between these two countries, which had resulted in the establishment of many military outposts in the region, culminated in a three year war that caused the death of 150,000 soldiers.

The immediate cause of the war dates back to 1883 when the war with Chile deprived Bolivia of its Pacific ports (Métraux, 1946, p. 204). By gaining access to the Paraguay river, Bolivia hoped to establish at least an indirect connection to the open sea (Hack, 1961, p. 24; Maybury-Lewis and Howe, 1980, p. 24). Paraguayan territory blocked their passage. The conflict became acute some years later when the production of livestock expanded on the Paraguayan side as well as on the Bolivian side of the disputed frontier. Especially near the Río Pilcomayo, Bolivian and Paraguayan cattle ranchers were in proximity and conflicts over the land arose. By stationing the military in the vicinity of the border, both countries hoped to secure their national interests (Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 101; Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 425). Rumours that oil might be present in this particular part of the Chaco, tipped the balance. From the 1930s onwards, both countries were determined to defend what they saw as their national territory and resources, even if they had to fight for it.

After decades of negotiation and the construction of fortresses in the area, war broke out in 1932. The battle was severe and protracted. Thousands of soldiers were sent into the hot, dry area. Many died on the battlefield, even more died of thirst. Not only soldiers got caught up in the war. Many Indians living in the disputed regions were forced to leave the area or were shot on sight. Sometimes they were accused of spying for the enemy, which often resulted in a cruel death (Chase-Sardi, 1972, p. 23).

After three years of severe fighting, Paraguayan troops finally managed to force the Bolivians back to the slopes of the *Cordillera*. An armistice was signed in 1935, followed by a definite agreement in 1938. The peace treaty, signed in Buenos Aires, indeed awarded Bolivia the desired passage to the Atlantic while Paraguay was left with legal control of the largest part of the disputed territory. The Paraguayan Chaco was enlarged from 156,167 to 246,950 square kilometres.

The military actions in the Gran Chaco have had an enormous impact on the Indian population in the area. Large numbers of Indians died as a direct result of the campaigns or the war, even more suffered deprivation of water, food, shelter and peace for extensive periods of time. Map 2.2 shows that the military fortresses in the Bolivian, Argentinean and Paraguayan Chaco are spread over almost the complete region. The vast majority of the Indians in the area therefore must have been in contact with the military in some way or another.

The military have contributed to the colonization of the Gran Chaco region. In Argentina, they guided the settlement of colonists in areas which they had opened up, and gathered valuable, detailed information on the region's physical condition. In Paraguay the military did not interfere in the settlement of colonists and the role of the army in this part of the Chaco is less significant.

Another substantial result of the military presence in the Gran Chaco is the political incorporation of the region into national territory and, consequently, the incorporation of the Indians into national society. Especially in Argentina, the military aimed to transform the more or less independent indigenous population into a reliable and, moreover, cheap labour force that could support the development of the region's economy. Due to the high demand for labour, especially in the more remote parts of the country, attention was focused on Indians as the solution to the overall labour shortage.

2.8 Government policy

In discussing the process of incorporation that is taking place in the Gran Chaco since 1875, the influence of government policy on the changes that have come about in the area cannot be disregarded. Governmental interference has initiated several developments that strongly stimulated the incorporation of the Gran Chaco. Three motives

Map 2.2 Military fortresses in the Gran Chaco before and during the Chaco war (Kleinpenning, 1984a, p. 25; Randle, 1981, p. 23; Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 119)

seem to be of major importance for the Paraguayan and Argentinean governments interference in the region's development.

The first reason for the Paraguayan and Argentine government to stimulate the incorporation of the Gran Chaco of course was the fact that the area, once opened up for agricultural and industrial investment, would contribute to the national economy. More land under cultivation would increase production, gross national product and possibly even export. The second motive for bringing the Gran Chaco into the national sphere of production was that the Argentine government, and to a lesser extent the Paraguayan government, were confronted with large numbers of landless peasants who applied for land. By opening up the Chaco, the governments could provide these peasants with land. Thirdly, the largely desolate Chaco has in the past often been the object of territorial conflicts between Bolivia, Argentina and Paraguay. A further occupation and development of the region was intended to safeguard the territories of the three nations involved against annexation by foreign powers and invasion of foreign settlers. Governmental interference in the incorporation of the Gran Chaco has been concentrated on several fields of policy which are discussed briefly below.

Improvement of transport facilities

The national governments of Paraguay and Argentina have undertaken several efforts to improve transport facilities in the Gran Chaco. With these efforts they hoped to initiate a process of colonization and modern economic development by creating all-weather market access for the farmers in the region.

Difficulties in transport have always been an extremely important obstacle in the economic development of the Gran Chaco. A number of rivers traverse the region but none of them is reliable when it comes to shipping. The water level generally fluctuates substantially, impeding navigability. Attention of the governments therefore, was focused mainly on the stimulation of road and railway traffic.

The construction of roads was the most important governmental effort to stimulate the colonization of the Gran Chaco. In the past sixty years, the Paraguayan and Argentine government have invested large amounts of money to improve the road connections in the area.

The Trans-Chaco highway, which connects Asunción with Bolivia is a clear example of governmental investment in the Gran Chaco. The Paraguayan government started the project in 1957. In 1962 the road was completed. In 1970 the government took the initiative of sealing the

road. By 1988 the road had been paved as far as Filadelfia, the centre of the Mennonite colonies. The construction of the Trans-Chaco highway has drastically changed the economy of the Paraguayan Chaco. Livestock farming has increased immensely as the cattle can now be easily transported to Asunción. The Mennonites have also profited greatly from the Trans-Chaco highway. The value of their land has risen substantially, and their products, of which a large portion is perishable, can be easily marketed in the country's capital. As mentioned in the previous sections, cattle raising increased at the expense of the cultivation of cotton. The construction of the road has reduced the travelling time from Filadelfia to Asunción from five days to a six or seven hour trip by bus or pick-up truck. Recently, Bolivian entrepreneurs donated to the Paraguayan Ministry of Public Services the material that is needed to seal the remaining 200 kilometres of the Trans-Chaco highway to the Bolivian border. Once the Trans-Chaco road is completely sealed, the connection between Asunción and Bolivia will be open the whole year.

The Paraguayan Ministry of Public Services recently started the construction of another arterial road in the Chaco. The road will connect Pozo Colorado with Pozo Hondo on the Argentine border. From there the road will lead through Salta and all the way to Antofagasta on the Pacific coast. The road will probably have far-reaching consequences for the Paraguayan Chaco because it may provide entry to foreign settlers and to international traffic (ABC Color, 30-8-91, p. 2).

In the 1960s, the Argentine government started sealing some major roads in and near the Gran Chaco. Some larger cities in north-western Argentina were connected by surfaced roads and lengthy routes were constructed to facilitate traffic between the capital Buenos Aires and the "remote north". In the east of the region an important road was greatly improved. This road, leading from Asunción all the way to Reconquista, links cities like Santa Fé, Resistencia, Formosa and Clorinda to the national road network and was completed in 1968. In the centre of the Argentine Chaco, a road system, composed of sealed and unsealed roads was constructed. Cities like Charata, Roque Sáenz Peña, Villa Angela and Castelli that were regional centres for the rural areas where cotton was cultivated, were linked to Resistencia and the national road network (Bünstorf, 1971a, pp. 31-2). Additionally, the Argentine government built two crossings over the Paraná river to improve the accessability of the Chaco area. In 1968 a tunnel between Santa Fé and Paraná was completed and in 1973, the bridge between Corrientes and

Barranqueras was opened to the public (Bünstorf, 1971a, p. 34; Bünstorf, 1981, p. 528).

Railways no longer play a significant role as a mode of transport in the Paraguayan Chaco. The narrow-gauge railways constructed by the *quebracho* industries at the beginning of the 20th century, are no longer in use and in fact a large portion has fallen into decay.

In northern Argentina, railways are still frequently used for transportation although road-traffic is tending to increase gradually. Three railways have played a major role in the incorporation of the Argentine Gran Chaco. Firstly, the railway from Rosario to Tucumán, which was completed at the end of the 19th century, gave an incredible impulse to sugar cane production in north-western Argentina (v. Hogerzeil, 1945, p. 231; Randle, 1981, p. 184). Secondly, the railroad from Resistencia into the interior of the Chaco stimulated the settlement of cotton farmers. The construction of this railway system started in 1890. Various cities like Roque Sáenz Peña, Quitilipí and Las Brenas underwent a steady growth as a result of the improved transport links (Bünstorf, 1969, pp. 189-92). Finally, a railroad connection has been built between Formosa and Embarcación. In 1915, the portion from Formosa to Las Lomitas was completed. It took fifteen years to construct the final part to Embarcación (Romero, 1977, p. 159).

The railways in the Argentine Chaco were only partially constructed by the national or provincial government. Private companies often invested large sums of money in the extension of the railway system, firstly because the exploitation of these railways was economically profitable and secondly because these companies often maintained economic relations with the timber and tannin producers in the area (Bünstorf, 1971c, p. 185). The railroad from Santa Fé to Resistencia, for instance, was constructed by the *Compañía Francesa de Ferrocarilles* (Altamirano et al., 1987, p. 221). This company was closely linked to the *Compañía de Tierras de Santa Fé*, the owner of some large *quebracho* forests, that later was to pass into the hands of the famous *Compañía La Forestal* (Bünstorf, 1971c, p. 185).

During the first decades of this century, the railway system in the Argentine Gran Chaco was mainly used to transport tannin, *quebracho* logs and timber from the Chaco to the southern markets. In the course of time, however, the railways increasingly rendered services to cotton and cattle farmers that had settled in the region (Iñigo Carrera, 1983, p. 13).

Promotion of immigration

Paraguay and Argentina have both tried to encourage the settlement of foreigners within their national borders. It was generally assumed that immigrants had the money and knowledge to improve the national economy and to open up remote areas for colonization.

After Paraguay had been defeated by the Triple Alliance in 1870 and had lost a substantial part of its population, the government did its utmost to attract foreigners to settle in the country. It even offered a free trip from Buenos Aires, the port where most of the European settlers arrived in Latin America, to Asunción. Unfortunately for Paraguay, the policy largely failed. From 1881 to 1920, only 21,924 immigrants settled in Paraguay while during the same period, no less than 4,458,470 people went to live in Argentina (Hack, 1961, pp. 37-8).

The first serious attempt undertaken by the Paraguayan government to stimulate the colonization of the Gran Chaco took place in 1858 when president Antonio López tried to encourage the immigration of non-hispanic Europeans to Paraguay and at the same time promote the occupation of remote parts of the national territory. López signed a contract with a French trading company in order to realise a settlement project in the Chaco (Hack, 1961, pp. 22-3). A couple of hundred Frenchmen took up residence in Nueva Burdeos, some twenty kilometres out of Asunción, and tried to build up an agricultural living. The colonization project failed totally. The Frenchmen were not pioneers prepared for the harsh living conditions in the area, but were badly selected city people who furthermore received only marginal governmental support. Ultimately, the French colonists returned to Europe at the expense of the Paraguayan government. It was to take at least another twenty years for the village to become repopulated. Nowadays the settlement is called Villa Hayes (Kleinpenning, 1984a, p. 16; Wilhelmy and Rohmeder, 1963, p. 425).

The vast majority of the immigrants who did come to Paraguay, settled down in Asunción or Eastern Paraguay. Efforts to stimulate the colonization of the Chaco remained without effect. This situation changed in the 1920s when a large group of Mennonites applied for settlement in the Paraguayan Chaco. The Paraguayan government was pleased with the immigration of these Mennonites who were said to be extremely successful farmers. The government even provided some exceptional and favourable incentives for the Mennonites like exemption from military service, free practice of religion, freedom to teach their own language in the colony schools and an exemption from tax duties

for a period of ten years after settlement (Hack, 1961, p. 39; Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 197) (see also chapter 7).

Argentine policy with respect to immigration was initiated in 1876 when act 817, *Ley de la Inmigración y Colonización*, was passed by the parliament. As a result of act 817, private investors were given the opportunity to start colonization schemes for which the authorities were prepared to hand over areas of up to 80,000 hectares. This was on condition that a minimum of 250 families would settle in the project within four years of its initiation (Borrini, 1986, p. 7).

One of the first agrarian colonies in the Argentine Chaco was Colonia Bouvier, founded in 1886. 80,000 hectares, situated more or less beyond Asunción on the bank of the Paraguay river, were handed over to *Bouvier y Compañía* (Borrini, 1986, p. 10).

In contrast to Paraguay, Argentina's immigration policy proved successful. In the period from 1880 to 1915, immigration exceeded emigration by 2.9 million (Lattes and Oteiza, 1986, p. 10). In some years, the number of immigrants exceeded 200,000 (v. Balen, 1937, p. 137). The largest proportion of the foreigners obviously did not settle in the Gran Chaco but ended up on the Pampa, in Buenos Aires or some other large city. During the economic world crisis in the 1930s, this mass-immigration became a problem for the Argentine economy. The government decided to launch a restrictive policy by selecting immigrants who would contribute to the country's development. Immigrants who arrived as a group, who brought their wives and children with them and who were prepared to settle in the barren, rural areas, were preferred. The unbridled settlement of large numbers of immigrants without any specific profession or skill came to an end, only experienced farmers were welcomed (v. Balen, 1937, p. 140).

Some years earlier, in the 1920s, the Argentine Minister of Agriculture, Le Breton, had attempted to encourage the settlement of foreigners in the remote parts of the country. In 1924 for instance he wrote the following to the National Congress:

> "In accordance with the wishes of the President of the Nation, in all the reports since the 12th of October 1922, when pronouncing decrees, I have demonstrated that the essential concern of this government is colonization; increasing the population and production (...). The population of our extensive country is not growing at the required rate; reckoned to be one million in 1853, the population had scarcely increased to

> 7,885,237 in 1914, and only to nine and a half million in the past ten years, a small increase in relation to our capacity and productive potentiality. (...) One can not deny, I insist, that 'countries without population are no more than geographical areas, and without population, all progress is impossible' as has been emphasized by the British Department of Colonization. (...)
>
> The social and economic development of this country and the solution to our financial problems will in the future be facilitated by a rapid increase of the population by means of immigration" (Iñigo Carrera, 1983, p. 71) (translation by the author).

Le Breton's attention was especially focused on northern Argentina. Every colonist who was prepared to settle in one of the agrarian colonies in Chaco or Formosa, could count on free tools, free cotton seeds and governmental support in many other ways. The policy proved effective. From 1914 to 1947 for instance, the population of the province of Formosa increased sixfold while the population of the Chaco province increased tenfold. Argentine population as a whole barely doubled in this period (Diaz Alejandro, 1970, p. 422). These striking rates of population growth of course were not the result of government policy alone. The fact that the costs of land in these areas were extremely low attracted large numbers of foreigners who wanted to start farming.

Today, Argentinean and Paraguayan authorities are still trying to lure (foreign) colonists to the Chaco. In Argentina a large colonization scheme that will provide thousands of Japanese settlers with land has recently been planned alongside the Bermejo river in the province of Salta (de la Cruz, 1989b, p. 45). On the 31th of October 1991, newspapers reported the following words of president Meném:

> "Argentina will accept a massive immigration of Jews, Arabs, Italians or people of whatever background. If 100,000 Jews wish to come to Argentina, they are welcome, as we need to populate our country". (ABC Color, 31-10-91, p. 23) (translation by the author)

In June 1991, the Paraguayan *Instituto de Bienestar Rural* (IBR) announced a plan for colonizing the western bank of the Paraguay river by encouraging Mennonites and *Criollos* to settle in this part of the Chaco (La Patria, 19-6-91, p. 9). The results of these policy measures remain to be seen.

The sale of public property

Directly related to the governments' efforts to promote immigration were measures that arranged the sale of state land to (foreign) colonists.

At the end of the war against the Triple Alliance, the part of the Chaco that had remained Paraguayan territory was in state ownership. Trying to make up for the financial losses of the war and to stimulate the economic development of the country, the Paraguayan authorities immediately started selling public property. Several acts were promulgated in the 1870s with the objective of selling state owned land. The results of these measures remained limited and the land that was sold was not situated in the Chaco.

This changed in 1883 when the *Ley de Venta de Tierras Públicas* was enacted, and more so in 1885 when a new *Ley de Venta de Tierras Públicas* was passed by the parliament. The acts of 1883 and 1885, aimed at the sale of public property, allowed for large areas to be sold to one owner and, moreover, did not preclude any specific area of public land from being sold. The new measures proved effective and attracted wealthy buyers who purchased extensive areas. In a few years, most public land in the Paraguayan Chaco was disposed of, to a few people. At the turn of the century, 13,190,625 hectares of land, or about 85% of the total area of the Paraguayan Chaco at that time, had been sold to 79 landowners. Carlos Casado had became the largest landowner in Paraguayan history by purchasing 5,6 million hectares of land (Kleinpenning, 1992, pp. 121-31).

In Argentina, the sale of public property in the Gran Chaco was started with the intention of encouraging economic development in the region. In 1876, the national government of Argentina enacted statute 817, *Ley de Inmigración y Colonización*, which led to the establishment of rural landholdings of public property. As it was explicitly stated in the act that the rural allotments were not to exceed 100 hectares per family and that the new landowners were obliged to make a considerable investment in the development of the land, the interest of potential farmers was limited.

In 1891 the Argentine government tried to accelerate the process of public land sale and proclaimed act 2.875, *Ley de Liquidación de Tierras Fiscales*. This act stated that potential landowners could buy as much land as they could afford and that they were no longer obliged to develop the purchased land. From then on, the number of large landholdings increased rapidly in the Argentine Chaco, and most of the land along the Paraná river was sold in just a few years. Landownership

was desirable only partly for productive use and many large landholders restricted their activities to speculation with their property. In the first decades of the 20th century, most areas that had been obtained in the eastern part of the Chaco were put to use for timber and tannin production (Bertone, 1985, p. 40; Iñigo Carrera, 1983, pp. 10, 36-9;; Velozo de Espinoza, 1986, pp. 43-4).

Incorporation of the Indian people as labourers

Not only were the Gran Chaco territory and the available resources of the region incorporated into the national economy and society, the indigenous people of the area were also incorporated. The majority of the Indian people who had lived autonomously and in isolation for centuries, came to depend on the regional labour market. The Indian hunting territories had been occupied by colonists and their subsistence economy undermined. Offering their labour to farms and enterprises in the region was the only solution to this crisis.

The Argentine government, in contrast to the Paraguayan government, launched a specific policy to stimulate the incorporation of the Indian people into the national economy.

In 1911, simultaneously with the final military campaigns to subdue the indigenous population of northern Argentina, the Ministry of Agriculture founded the *reducción* Napalpí in the central part of the province of Chaco, near the cotton colonies (Altamirano et al., 1987, pp. 215-20). The objective of the government in establishing the so-called *reducciones* was to conserve and concentrate the Indian labour force in camps. The cotton colonies, the timber companies and the sugar mills needed large numbers of labourers during certain periods of the year. With the installation of the *reducciones* the government hoped to ensure the farms and industries a sufficient supply of cheap labour. The Indians were forced to settle in the villages and were obliged to accept temporary work on one of the farms or enterprises. Because the Indians' labour was not needed for the whole year, they received a small plot of arable land to survive the jobless periods. Of course these plots were kept very small in order to encourage the Indians to seek as much paid work as possible (Iñigo Carrera, 1981, p. 242). This policy of "forced settlement" in fact served various interests. It created a large and cheap labour force in the developing area, it taught the Indian population discipline, it trained the Indians in agricultural modes of production and finally it broke their resistance to subjugation (Iñigo Carrera, 1983, p. 12).

Four other settlements in the Argentinean Chaco served as *reducciones*: Bartolomé de las Casas in the province of Formosa, Nueva Pompeya, an old Franciscan missionary station in the north-western part of the province of Chaco, and Francisco Javier Muñiz and Florentino Ameghino, both founded in 1935 for the Pilagá Indians (Iñigo Carrera, 1982, p. 25; Métraux, 1946, p. 205; Ubertalli, 1987, p. 41). Unfortunately, the exact number of Indians who were involved in the Argentine *reducciones* is not known.

The issue of concessions for the exploitation of oil

The governments of Paraguay and Argentina have also interfered in the economic development of the Gran Chaco by issuing permits for the exploration and possible exploitation of oil reserves.

The Paraguayan Chaco has attracted the attention of oil companies since the Chaco war with Bolivia which started in 1932. In 1944 the first permit to drill for oil was issued to the Union Oil Company of California (Russo, 1983). In the course of time, a number of oil companies have explored the Paraguayan Chaco. Recently, in 1990, the Phillips Petroleum oil company obtained the rights to explore and exploit an area of no less than 22,000 square kilometres near the Bolivian border (Southern Cone Report, December 1990). To this day, however, reliable confirmation that oil reserves are indeed located in western Paraguay, has not been found.

In the Argentine Chaco on the other hand, exploitable oil reserves have been found. In 1989, oil was produced at six locations: Río Teuco and Nueva Población in the province of Chaco, and Laguna Yema, Las Lomitas, Pozo del Tigre and Fontana in the province of Formosa. In Palma Largo, Formosa, some 100 kilometres north of Ingeniero Juárez, the state-owned oil company *Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales* has established a large refinery. A village has arisen near the plant to house labourers and a road has been constructed to transport the oil from Palma Largo to the main provincial highway (Hoek, 1990, p. 65; Marín, 1986, p. 58).

In summary I conclude that the efforts of the Paraguayan and Argentinean governments to stimulate the economic development of the Gran Chaco have not resulted in drastic changes. Although the infrastructure has been improved substantially, problems concerning transport in the region remain the bottleneck for colonization and further development. The improved transport facilities that have been

established, nevertheless have attributed to a shift in the Gran Chaco economy from subsistence-orientation towards market-orientation.

People from outside the Gran Chaco have settled in the region, but their total number remains rather small. The few immigrants that did settle in the area often purchased large areas of land. The indigenous population of the Gran Chaco has been incorporated on a large scale into national economy. Especially in Argentina, this incorporation was mainly the result of governmental policy. The position of the Indian people in the area has not improved as a result of this policy.

Up to now, the exploitation of oil in the Gran Chaco is not strongly contributing to the incorporation of the region. In those places where drilling is taking place, the number of labourers is still small. In fact, the oil companies are isolated enclaves in the area. If in the near future more oil should be found in the Gran Chaco, the involvement of this branch of industry in the region's economy and society would probably increase.

All in all I can reasonably conclude that the Argentine and Paraguayan governments are anxious to exploit the natural resources and the agricultural potentialities of the Gran Chaco. If, however, this exploitation were to require considerable governmental investment, the interest would decrease rapidly. The economic development of the Gran Chaco, and even the improvement of living conditions for the region's population, are in fact of little or no priority in national policy.

2.9 General observations

As described in the preceding sections, a process of incorporation, marked by its multiformity, has clearly begun in the Gran Chaco.

From an economic point of view, the Gran Chaco and its population have undergone drastic changes. From about 1875 onwards, forest exploitation and extensive livestock production expanded. Above all the extraction of tannin from *quebracho* trees initiated a rapid increase of the region's productivity and its infrastructure. The production of tannin decreased heavily during the 1940s and '50s and it is currently of little significance to the gross production of the Gran Chaco. Timber industries are still exploiting various valuable species of trees like the *palo santo* and the *quebracho colorado*. Currently, livestock production is mainly concentrated in the east where in earlier days the tannin companies cleared the bushy and wooded areas and

where climatic conditions are more favourable. Livestock raising produces the highest output of all economic sectors in the region.

Crop farming started somewhat later and was largely concentrated in three areas. North-western Argentina was, and still is, dominated by sugar production. In the central part of the Argentine Chaco, the cultivation of cotton played a crucial role in the process of colonization which started there at the beginning of the 20th century. Finally, in the heart of the Paraguayan Chaco we come across the Mennonite colonists who arrived in the 1920s and '30s, and who live a prosperous life as crop farmers and cattle ranchers.

All in all, in some parts of the Gran Chaco, the indigenous economy has been replaced by a modern agrarian economy. Recently, an increase of livestock production can be observed, while on the other hand, crop farming does not show significant growth. As some specialists have earlier indicated, given the environmental conditions of the Gran Chaco, livestock raising seems to be the most appropriate activity (see e.g. Daly, 1990, p. 193). Industrial activity is still scant and in fact restricted to the extraction and processing of raw materials such as cotton and *quebracho* wood which are produced in the region (Romero, 1977b, p. 11). The tertiary, or service sector as yet plays only a minor role in the region's production and employment.

Studied from a demographic perspective, the incorporation drastically changed the population structure of the Gran Chaco. In the course of time, clergymen, the military, farmers, speculators, government officials and entrepreneurs, have settled in the area. Figure 2.4 illustrates this population growth.

The figure clearly shows that the population of the Argentine Chaco has steadily increased over the years. The Paraguayan part of the Gran Chaco, on the other hand, shows a marked decrease in population over the past twenty to thirty years. It appears that the process of colonization in this region has stagnated, at least as far as population growth is concerned. Apropos, the unreliability of these figures should be noted as they are distorted by the fact that the Indian population is not always included.

The arrival of immigrants completely changed the local society in the Gran Chaco. Not only did the density of population increase in some areas, the inequality between groups in the new society also increased. Nowadays, political power and property relations are strongly linked to the different classes that have arisen in Gran Chaco society. The

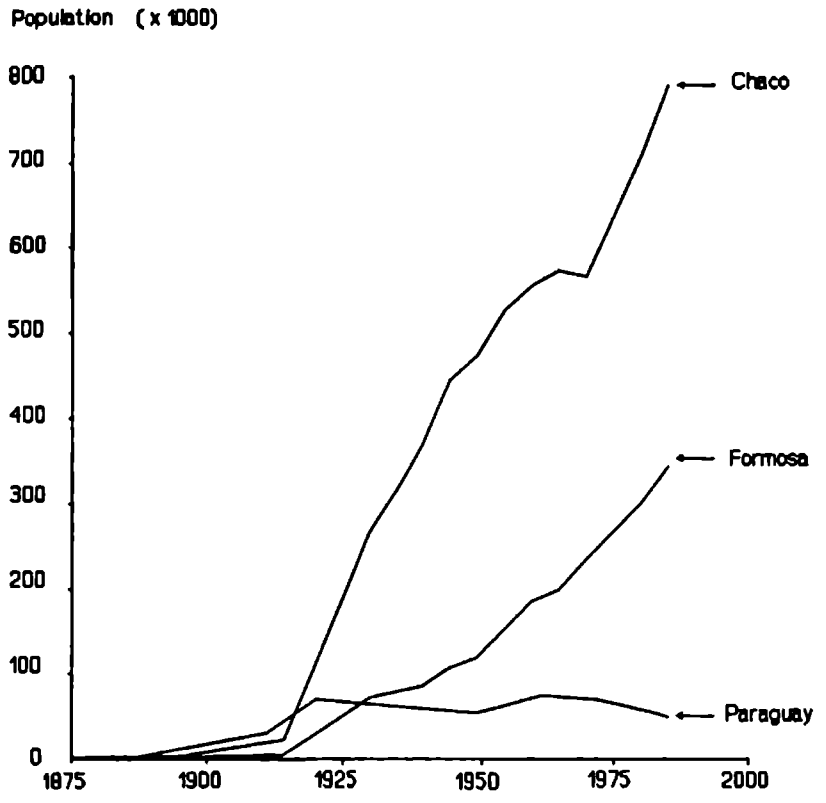


Figure 2.4 Population in the Argentine provinces of Chaco and Formosa and of the Paraguayan Chaco (1875-1990) (Hack, 1961; INEC, 1989; Kleinpenning, 1992; Lattes, 1980; Randle, 1980; Statistisches Bundesamt, 1978/1989/1992)

traditional, indigenous society which was horizontally structured, has disappeared and given way to a more hierarchically structured society in which capitalist relations play a major role. At the top of the hierarchy we find large-estate owners and government officials, followed by farmers, missionaries and so forth. At the very bottom of the social scale we find the indigenous population of the area, which is subjected to discrimination and is politically powerless.

The incorporation of the region has also resulted in a number of spatial changes. Rural land use and livestock production have increased, especially near the Mennonite colonies, along the rivers, in the *Chaco Bajo* and along transport routes. Table 2.4 shows the current structure of land use in the Gran Chaco while map 2.4 illustrates the location of various rural centres.

Table 2.4 Present-day land use in the Gran Chaco

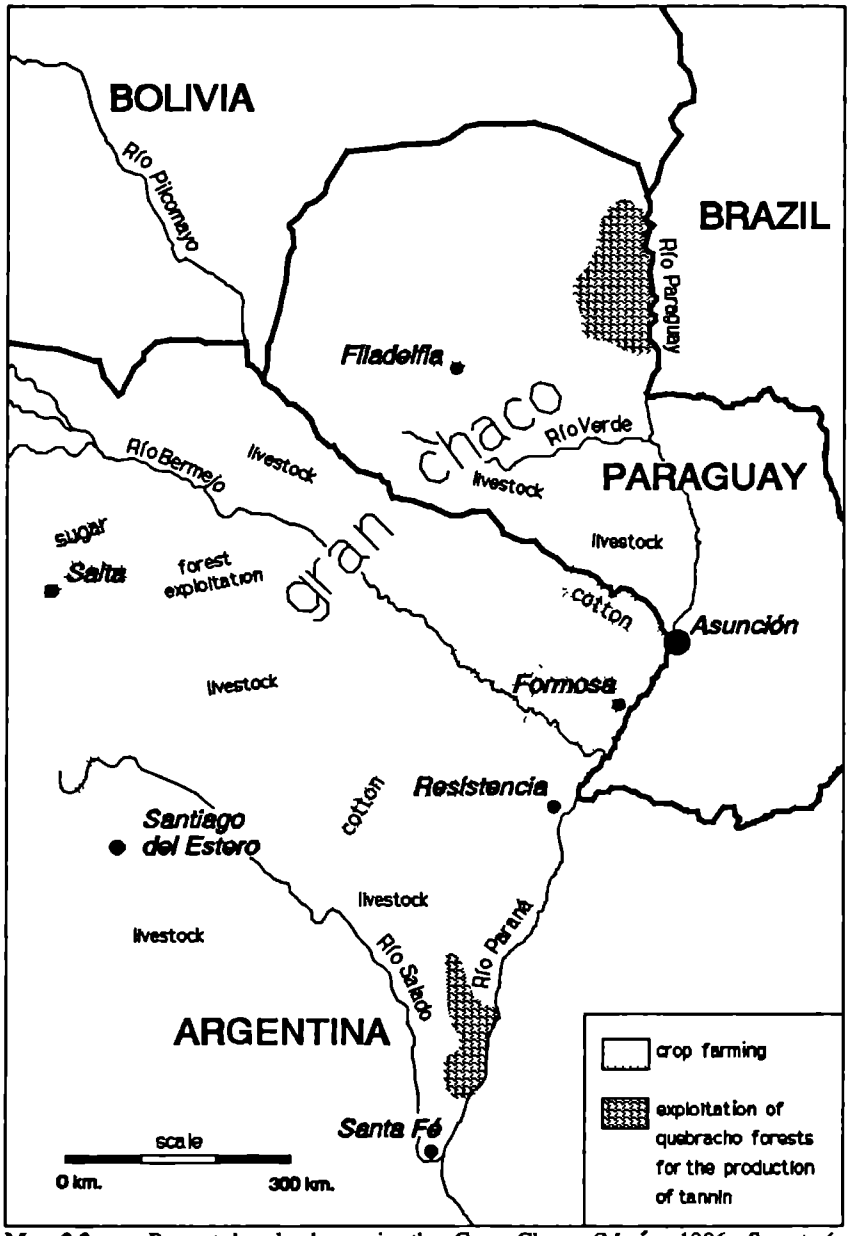
Land use	Paraguayan Chaco		Argentinean Chaco			
			Chaco		Formosa	
	%	km²	%	km²	%	km²
Forest	46%	112,900	40.1%	39,953	43.9%	31,637
Pastures	40%	100,000	33.7%	33,576	41.3%	29,763
Cultivated land	*7%	*17,190	15.1%	15,045	3.0%	2,162
Others / unusable	7%	16,835	11.1%	11,059	11.8%	11,059
total	100%	246,295	100%	99,633	100%	72,066

* These figures are probably overestimated and it is likely that they indicate the area with arable potentiality instead of actually cultivated land. The Paraguayan Ministry of Agriculture gives a figure of 608 km² actually under cultivation in 1989 (MAG, 1990, pp. 7-90).

(Instituto Geográfico Militar, 1989, pp. 37 and 42; Secretaría Técnica de Planificación, 1985, p. 118)

It might be interesting to determine what proportion of the Gran Chaco has actually been occupied, or in other words, what area is still "free" for the Indians to live in undisturbed. Unfortunately, exact data with respect to the occupation of the region is not available. It is possible, however, to derive an indication of the actual occupancy of the region from the rural census data from Argentina in 1988 and from Paraguay in 1991. These two censuses produced the figures as shown in table 2.5.

Table 2.5 illustrates that at least 50% of the Paraguayan Chaco has been put into agrarian use, while for the provinces of Formosa and Chaco this is 67% and 53% respectively. However, the area actually occupied is likely to be larger than indicated by these figures. Obviously, not all agrarian exploitations were included in the countings, some have surely been overlooked. In its *Plan Diagnóstico de la Provincia de Formosa*, for instance, the *Secretaría de Planeamiento y Desarrollo* (1982, p. 52) gives an estimate of 6,003,896 hectares



Map 2.3 Present-day land use in the Gran Chaco (Marín, 1986; Secretaría Técnica de Planificación, 1985)

exploited for agricultural purposes which would include 83% of the total area of the province of Formosa. Furthermore, the figures refer to agrarian land use only, while the area occupied by infrastructure, urbanization, rivers, etc. is not included. It may safely be concluded that the unoccupied area is smaller than indicated in the table.

Table 2.5 Present-day occupation of land in the Gran Chaco for agrarian purposes

	Paraguayan Chaco	Argentinean Chaco	
		Chaco	Formosa
Total area (ha.)	24,629,500	9,963,300	7,206,600
Area occupied for agrarian use (ha.)	12,388,987	5,309,775	4,814,200
Exploited area as a percentage of the total area	50%	53%	67%

(INEC, 1991; MAG, 1992)

Another important theme with respect to spatial changes in the area is urbanization. Although large cities are absent from the region, some settlements have grown into local or even regional service centres.

Although not situated in the interior of the Chaco, Resistencia is the largest city in the region with over 200,000 inhabitants, followed by Formosa with 95,000 inhabitants. In the interior, Roque Saenz Peña, with a population of 50,000 people, and Tartagal, Villa Angela and Gral. José de San Martín with some 25,000 inhabitants each, are among the larger settlements in the Argentine Gran Chaco (Instituto Geográfico de la República Argentina, 1989).

In the Paraguayan Chaco are no cities or villages of significant size. Russo (1983, p. 84) mentions the following data; Puerto Pinasco, 7,032; Villa Hayes, 4,759; Benjamín Aceval, 2,881; Mariscal Estigarribia, 2,167; Fuerte Olimpio, 3,197 and Filadelfia, 4,881 inhabitants. Indians are not included in these figures.

2.10 Conclusion

Recapitulating, from the developments that have taken place in the Gran Chaco area since 1875, three final conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, the recent history of the Gran Chaco indicates an extreme dependence of the region upon external factors and influences (Brodersohn and Slutzky, 1987, p. 218). The exploitation of forests, livestock production, the cultivation of sugar cane and cotton, the settlement of colonists, the arrival of the Mennonites, military interest and governmental policy are all activities and influences initiated from outside the region. The Gran Chaco and its Indian population are in fact at the mercy of capitalist investors and speculators, the Paraguayan and Argentine government and foreigners who have purchased large estates in the region. Dependency is a typical characteristic of incorporation. The dominant classes in the Paraguayan and the Argentinean national societies largely determine the development and the future of remote areas like the Gran Chaco and of powerless minorities like the indigenous people.

Secondly, the presence and moreover the incorporation of the Indian population in the Gran Chaco has facilitated a significant increase in economic activities in the area. The fact that the region offered a cheap labour force to farmers and entrepreneurs created a favourable climate for investment. In the course of time, in different fields of production, the Indians were employed on a large scale. Wages have always been low, labour contracts lacking and the Indian people have not been sufficiently organized to protect themselves against exploitation and other abuse. Without this Indian proletariat, the economic prospects of the region would have been far less rosy. Over the years, the situation of the Indian people has not improved substantially. Thousands of Indians still work for farmers and ranchers in the Gran Chaco who profit from their labour.

A third and final conclusion with respect to the incorporation of the Gran Chaco is that this process has resulted in a gradual occupation of the Indian territory. The "agents" involved in the process, which have past in revue in the foregoing sections, have taken possession of Indian living areas and have "legally" confirmed their ownership over these lands. Indian access to these privately owned areas has been hindered or forbidden. The occupation of extensive areas in the Gran Chaco for mainly economic purposes has resulted in a disturbance of Indian isolation and autonomy, and as a consequence the vast majority of the indigenous inhabitants of the Gran Chaco is currently confronted with socio-political, economic or territorial problems. The occupation of the area is still very fragmentary. Up to now, incorporation has resulted in an unequal distribution of population and economic activity. Some

regions have developed into highly productive areas where population is concentrated and where urbanization progresses while other regions have been largely neglected and show a backwardness in economic activity. In comparison with the Argentinean Chaco, the Paraguayan Chaco is on the whole still marginally developed and populated.

3. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENT POLICY

3.1 Introduction

Indigenous people all over the world have either already lost their traditional territories, or are currently confronted with the threat of losing their land in the near future. As a result of the expanding global economy, and subsequently the accelerating process of colonization, the majority of indigenous peoples and communities have been dispossessed of their homelands or have been driven away to other, less desirable areas.

The Indian people of the Gran Chaco are no exception in this respect. The gradual occupation of the Gran Chaco region by colonists and other entrepreneurs, has made it extremely difficult for the Indian population to continue its traditional mode of life. The traditional economy of the Indian people, based on hunting, gathering, fishing and some gardening, depended on the availability of large areas of land. The settlement of farmers, ranchers and industrialists in the region has deprived the Indian people of their home and their resources.

Apart from a handful of Ayoreo Indians, living in the isolated northern part of the Paraguayan Chaco, all Indians have been forced to abandon their traditional means of support. For income, the Indians have come to depend ever more on paid work on the ranches, in the sugar industry or on the Mennonite farms, which have been established in and near their territory. Some Indians have managed to make a living through the manufacture and sale of handicrafts. A small group is able to survive by the cultivation of crops.

The Indian people of the Gran Chaco have never legally laid claim to their land. They used the land collectively instead of owing it individually. When foreigners entered the region, this more or less stable situation came to an end. The national governments of Paraguay and Argentina issued legal land titles to anyone who intended to colonize the region for agricultural or industrial purposes, and who was prepared to pay a modest price for the land. At first, the Indian communities had little understanding of what was going on with respect to the legal

ownership of their territory, and consequently did nothing to secure tenancy of their land. Later, when the Indian people were confronted with the actual loss of their territory and the communities tried to participate in the distribution of the land, they were deliberately excluded by the governments. The Indian mode of production was considered inefficient, but moreover, Paraguayan and Argentine law did not accept collective landownership, especially since the Indian communities were not registered with the civil authorities.

This chapter focuses on government policy with respect to indigenous peoples in general and to the Indian population of the Gran Chaco in particular. At first, the chapter may seem a series of somewhat disconnected treatises on various subjects. Hopefully, the connections between these themes will become obvious.

In the first section I look at so-called "hunter and gatherer societies" from a worldwide, and somewhat anthropological perspective. Three themes come to the fore in detail; land use systems of hunter and gatherer peoples all over the world, confrontation with moving frontiers of colonization, and finally government policy with respect to indigenous peoples.

Government policy, this time relating to the Indian peoples of the Gran Chaco in particular, is the subject of section 3.3. In the 1980s, Paraguay and Argentina promulgated a number of indigenist statutes enabling the Indians to become legal owners of the land they occupy. I thoroughly study the objectives of these laws and their suitability to improve the present situation of the Indians.

In the last section, I attempt to pave the way for an evaluation of the present indigenist policy of the Paraguayan and Argentinean governments. I elaborate on the concept of "spatial marginalization", and create a framework for use in the analysis of the case studies. The objective of the framework is not merely to provide a testable checklist of variables related to spatial marginalization, but more to develop a clear perspective of analysis.

3.2 Some reflections on hunters and gatherers

Over the past two centuries, society has drastically expanded. The industrial revolution induced an enormous increase in the demand for both raw materials and land. Production as well as consumption have

gained unprecedented heights. To facilitate this rapid increase of production, all kinds of resources were exploited at a staggering rate while large natural areas fell a prey to colonization.

Remote parts of the world like deserts, tropical rainforest, and largely unoccupied archipelagos, have been transformed into productive areas contributing to the global economy. Governmental programmes, aiming to enlarge national productive territory by stimulating entrepreneurs and farmers to open up new areas, have become more common. The frequently launched policy of; "people without land to lands without people" had an incredible impact on the indigenous inhabitants of the areas concerned, for it should be clear that of course there *were* people living in these "lands without people" (Beauclerk et al., 1988, p. 16). Nowadays, the autonomy of many tribal societies all over the world is undermined by the direct actions of industrialists, settlers, missionaries, and military, who have entered the indigenous peoples' territories often with governmental support.

The territories in which hunting and gathering societies live vary greatly, from deserts to rainforests, from tropical areas to polar regions. Nevertheless, the cultures of these peoples show some striking similarities when it comes to land use and production.

Firstly, a community which depends on hunting, fishing and gathering is forced to move to new territory from time to time. Natural resources are limited and become exhausted after a period of exploitation by a group of hunters and gatherers. The exploited area needs time to recuperate and so the community has to move to other, comparable sites. In general, there exists a more or less fixed pattern of these migrations so that the nomadic communities return to former territories after these have had enough time to recuperate. Authorities often interpret this pattern of migration and extensive land use as unproductive and ineffective, which in their view entitles them to sell the land to non-indigenous farmers (Bodley, 1975, p. 84; Service, 1979, p. 4).

The nomadic way of life has direct consequences for the culture of indigenous peoples; accommodation is often temporary and provisional, inter-tribal contacts are frequent, importance of gardening is at most marginal, and possessions on the whole are few. Of course the frequency of migration as well as the traversed distances depend strongly on social and ecological factors.

The second characteristic of hunter and gatherer cultures is a strong

"economic socialism" which finds its expression in the far-reaching sharing of property, food and favours among the members of the community. Anthropologists describe this phenomenon as "reciprocity" (Service, 1979, p. 16). Although reciprocity is primarily a cultural phenomenon, there are also economic reasons for it. Hunting is not successful every day. However, the hunters and their groups do have to eat every day. The most logical solution is to share the catch among the whole community so that everything is used and everyone can profit equally. The same goes for the gathering of fruits and other foods, which, although less variable than hunting, is not stable enough to meet daily family needs. Mutual support along this pattern is not only a social system that strengthens the community ties, but moreover a precondition for survival in the harsh and unfriendly environments where the hunting and gathering peoples usually dwell.

The third similarity between the various hunting and gatherer societies is that these peoples often have a special, mythical relation with their territory. Tribal land often holds a highly symbolic and emotional meaning for the indigenous peoples as the repository of their ancestors, the location where the history of the group started or the dwelling places of their gods and other sacred features linked to tribal religion (Beauclerk et al., 1988, p. 4; Bodley, 1975, p. 84). When indigenous peoples claim land from the government, these non-economic factors with respect to the location of the requested land are of the highest importance. Unfortunately, the mythical relation between tribal peoples and their territories is often misunderstood and even more frequently ignored by the governments.

Closely related to the economic, symbolic and religious meaning of tribal land, is the fact that indigenous peoples never characterize their hunting and gathering territories as property, as a commodity which can be individually owned (Beauclerk et al., 1988, p. 4). "Custodianship", rather than ownership, can only be claimed by a group that lives on, works with, and is religiously tied to the land. Throughout history, many conflicts have occurred between indigenous peoples who claimed the usufruct of their territories, and colonists who invaded tribal lands of which the owners were unregistered and therefore legally non-existent.

During the past few centuries, virtually all indigenous cultures and economies in the world have been influenced by "western expansion" in one way or another. The increase of international migration, trade, and information exchange has resulted in a network of relations in which

even the most remote regions of the world participate.

Many formerly isolated regions all over the world have been "discovered". As a result of these "discoveries", the aboriginal inhabitants living in these areas made contact with "western civilization". In some cases, large numbers of foreign colonists settled in the regions, immediately taking possession of extensive areas, burning down forests, and starting with crop cultivation or cattle farming. In other cases the immigration to the newly "discovered" lands or regions was relatively modest. The initial exploitation was restricted to the extraction of immediately available resources like gold, silver, nuts, rubber, oil and wood. In all cases, however, the arrival of settlers of non-indigenous origin brought about a contact between two cultures, one so-called "modern" or "civilized", the other "traditional" or "primitive".

The established contact between indigenous communities and western society, has considerably changed the cultures of tribal peoples. In short three major changes can be distinguished.

Firstly, indigenous populations have diminished substantially worldwide. Several developments serve to explain this decrease. Exotic diseases such as measles, dysentery, smallpox, and diphtheria, introduced by foreign settlers and industrialists, caused a tremendous population decline (Pollock, 1980, pp. 88-90). These diseases at times wiped out complete tribes. Furthermore, a large portion of the indigenous peoples lost their hunting territory and with it, their basis of subsistence (Moody, 1988). Conflicts with "white settlers", often caused by the violation of indigenous territorial rights, were another threat to indigenous groups, especially because their enemies generally were militarily superior. Finally, numerous indigenous peoples have abandoned their traditional territory, culture and economy, and have been incorporated into "modern society".

Secondly, the majority of indigenous cultures have at least partially adopted the "western" perception of land and labour as commodities. Forced by miserable economic circumstances, many indigenous groups have adapted themselves to the capitalist economy. Some stayed in rural areas and became farmers, ranchers or agricultural labourers, others went to urban areas and tried to find a job as industrial workers or in the informal sector.

Finally, the contact between "traditional" and "modern" society has resulted in a number of social and cultural changes within the indigenous communities. The extent in which these changes occur varies. Gender roles for instance, have often altered considerably. In

imitation of "western society", women in native communities have occasionally been deprived of their former economic tasks and consequently, their status has declined. Currently, new economic goals are aspired by some indigenous peoples, for they have seen the luxury offered by western consumer society. Community culture and communal economy have sometimes shifted towards individuality, and the spiritual world view of many native cultures has been replaced by materialism, capitalism and Christian religion.

Government attitude and policy with respect to indigenous people has diverged strongly over time and from country to country. Roughly speaking, national governments, confronted with native peoples who occupied territories that needed to be colonized, have chosen from five policies in order to "solve" the problem. These five options are still the main alternatives for administration relating to indigenous affairs.[1]

Genocide

Contacts between indigenous peoples and colonists have often resulted in violent conflicts. In numerous cases colonists and governments did not even consider the killing of indigenous people a criminal act because the indigenous people were often not regarded as human beings. Murdering the natives for economic purposes was generally accepted as an inconvenient but necessary measure. Applied methods of genocide diverged from poisoning waterwells and sowing dissension within and between tribes, to direct military action. Cases are known in which the natives were hunted and killed just for "fun" or "sport" (see e.g. Kloos, 1974, p. 45; Moody, 1988, pp. 58-67).

The colonists, often supported by the national government or the military, generally had firearms at their disposal and consequently could easily defeat the indigenous peoples. Thousands of natives have been killed brutally. The best-known example is probably the battle at Wounded Knee in 1890. Sitting Bull, one of the last Sioux chiefs in the whole of North America, was killed by the police after he had resisted arrest. The Sioux thereupon tried to flee their reservation, but several cavalry regiments under the command of colonel Forsyth forced them to stay and fight a fierce battle. Hundreds of Sioux were slaughtered and

[1] The alternatives of government policy presented here do not specifically relate to hunter and gatherer societies, but also involve other indigenous peoples that live from pastoralism, crop farming or shifting cultivation.

Wounded Knee still is a symbol of Indian oppression in the United States of America (Von Nostitz, 1970, pp. 108-111).

We should, however, not delude ourselves into thinking that genocide of indigenous people only took place in the dim, distant past. Not too long ago, the newspapers reported on the killing of some two million Ibo in Biafra, Eastern Nigeria, on the violent oppression of the Tibetans by the Chinese government, on the massacre of Kurds, on the oppressive system of Apartheid, etcetera.

Resettlement in less wanted areas

Very few governments have respected indigenous territories when national interests like resources, security and agricultural production were at stake. The Brazilian indigenist statute of 1973, for instance, explicitly permitted the government to remove the Indians from their lands when it was considered necessary (Ramos, 1984, p. 93). The political leaders of Uganda in the 1970s suddenly decided to remove the Ik people by simply loading them into trucks and driving them out of their homeland (Bodley, 1975, p. 108).

Sometimes, the removal of the indigenous groups was not an official government policy, but nevertheless, civilian actions which resulted in a forced migration of the natives, were widely condoned. South African *Boers* for instance, began to herd their cattle in the natives territory, destroying their gardens and taking over their houses. As a consequence, the indigenous inhabitants of the region were forced to move (Bodley, 1975, p. 29).

Resettlement of the indigenous people generally took place in less profitable areas in remote parts of the country. In general, it was of no concern to the government what the chances of social, cultural and economic survival of the removed indigenous communities were, once they were cut off from the land and resources to which they had been religiously and economically tied. More often than not, in these new areas, the natives were deprived of proper water, food and service facilities.

Economic exploitation and forced integration

Instead of killing or resettling the indigenous people, some national governments have tried to incorporate the natives into the national economy as a cheap labour force. Especially in those areas where extractive activities or industries started with the exploitation of natural resources within the indigenous territories, the native inhabitants have

been mobilized on a large scale. Brazilian Indians, for instance, have been an integral part of the "rubber boom" as low-paid workers for the entrepreneurs, and large numbers of Australian Aborigines were mobilized as cheap labourers in digging for cowrie gum (Pollock, 1980, p. 95; Weinstein, 1983, p. 25).

In order to transform indigenous people into useful workers, governments often launched a policy of forced integration. The natives had to adapt themselves to national society in every possible respect. Government policy directed towards the integration of tribal people into national society, generally passed along a number of more or less clearly defined stages. Bodley (1975, p. 66) mentions the following: appointing political authority over the indigenous people; imposing the judicial system of the state; collecting taxes; instituting military recruitment; collecting census data and finally extending the national educational system and health care.

The activities of missionaries from divergent religious backgrounds, have often, either intentionally or unintentionally, contributed to this policy of forced integration in a cultural and moral way. The missions instilled into the indigenous tribes a new religion and, with it, a new system of values and moral standards which often coincided with national religion. As a consequence, the indigenous people were often no longer allowed to celebrate their tribal rituals and feasts, traditional leadership was undermined, and the practising of indigenous religions was prohibited. Missionary activities have frequently interfered with the social coherence of groups.

A clear illustration of government policy directed towards the integration of tribal people into national society and economy are the efforts undertaken by the United States government to induce the Inuit peoples of Alaska to farm reindeer. Thirteen hundred reindeer from Scandinavian countries were brought to Alaska and some Lapps were hired to train the Inuit as managers for the highly organized, large scale farms. Inuit culture and tradition were completely ignored in the project (Josselin de Jong, 1972, p. 17).

Forced isolation in reservations

An alternative to the resettlement of the indigenous people in less wanted areas in the country, is the isolation and concentration of groups in reservations. In several countries all over the world, certain parts of national territory have been reserved for native inhabitants. Examples are again richly available; the North American Indians who have been

confined to reservations, the blacks in South Africa who have been sent to the "homelands", and the Australian Aborigines who have to live and work in demarcated areas.

In some cases, an agreement between the indigenous people and the government has been reached on the location of these reservations. In other cases, however, the government has neglected the wishes of the natives and only conceded marginal areas to be appointed as reservations. Consequently, a large number of reservations were located outside the natives' traditional territories (Bodley, 1975, p. 87).

In general, the areas reserved for the indigenous people are too small to enable them to continue their traditional mode of production based on hunting and gathering. In cases where considerable areas are handed over as reserved areas, the land is usually second-rate quality. Once the natives settle in the reservation, they often have to adapt to "modern standards" and make a living as farmers. The boundaries of the reserved areas are frequently disputed when non-indigenous farmers and ranchers in the vicinity of the reservation want to enlarge their estates. In the course of time, many reserved areas have been partially occupied by outsiders who deliberately moved fences, drove their cattle into the reservation or bribed surveyors and other officials. From the 80,000 hectares which had been reserved for the indigenous population of Río Grande do Sul, Brazil, in 1913, for instance, only 32,000 hectares were left in 1967. Legal and illegal actions had deprived the Indians of over half their territory (Bodley, 1975, p. 90; Burger, 1987, p. 109).

Land grants for the indigenous people[2]

Recently a number of governments have come to the conclusion that the indigenous people within the borders of the country have a right to live and work on the lands where they have lived for generations. Some governments even translated these ideas in actual policy and started to hand over parts of the indigenous territory to the native communities. The indigenous peoples then became legally recognized owners of these areas. In most cases, the property title of the land is registered for the indigenous community as a whole, in some cases, however, traditional communal land tenure is not allowed.

---

[2] We could of course add one more policy, the "policy of *laissez faire*" which in fact is widely carried out in areas and countries where the competition for land has not yet started. Some groups of Inuit hunters in Greenland for instance, have been able to continue their traditional mode of life without much interference from the outside world.

In this respect the policy of the Ecuadorian government towards the indigenous inhabitants of the Amazon basin is illustrative. The government, confronted with large numbers of landless Indians, has been responsive to the Indian requests for the retrocession of their former territories. Between 1962 and 1982, some 40% of the allocated land in the Ecuadorian Amazon region, a total of 345,677 hectares, was officially handed over to Indian communities (Uquillas, 1985, p. 201).

A similar policy is implemented by the Kenyan government with the Masai people in the southern part of the country. So-called "group ranches", large areas where the Masai can herd their cattle and live as a community, have been established by the government. The land is officially owned by the Masai communities themselves. Some of these group ranches seem to fall apart because some groups of Masai chose to redistribute the land among the individual households (Rutten, 1992).

In the following section I return to the Gran Chaco and discuss the policy of the Paraguayan and Argentinean governments with respect to the Indian tribes. After centuries of brutal oppression and forced resettlement, current policy of both countries has resulted in a number land acts which enable the Indian peoples to gain communal, legally recognized ownership over parts of their traditional territories.

3.3 Legislation with respect to land for the Gran Chaco Indians

In order to fully understand present-day indigenist legislation in Paraguay and Argentina, it is necessary to go back into history and make an inventory of some governmental measures which, in one way or another, affected the position of the indigenous people of the Gran Chaco. This historical overview concludes with the current indigenist land acts briefly mentioned above.

One of the first measures that affected the Indian people of the Paraguayan Gran Chaco was the promulgation of *La Ley de Colonización y del Hogar* in 1904. This act authorized the establishment of Indian *reducciones* under the administration of religious missions. In 1907 *La Ley de Reducciones de Tribus Indígenas* added that these *reducciones* should not exceed 7,500 hectares (Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 237; Vázquez, 1981, p. 101). The objective of these statutes was to confine the Indian people of Paraguay to small, neatly arranged areas, where they could be controlled and pacified.

In 1940, *El Estatuto Agrario* indicated that for each Paraguayan Indian an area of averagely three hectares could be reserved. The act, at the same time, enabled Indians who had proven to be sufficiently capable of possessing and cultivating the land, to purchase individual plots. Those Indians who were not ready for individual landownership, were to reside in the *reducciones*. *El Estatuto Agrario* of 1963 dictated that the remaining Indian populations would be supported by the IBR, the *Instituto de Bienestar Rural*, in order to incorporate them into the national economy and society (act 854/63; article 16). Additionally, *El Estatuto Agrario* of 1963, like its predecessor from 1940, enabled Indians to become legally recognized landowners. In order to be considered for this, the Indians had to have themselves inscribed on the national register. The statute of 1963 still left no room for communal landownership, although this was explicitly aspired to by the Indian communities in the country (Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 237; Vázquez, 1981, p. 102).

Actual policy with regard to the Indian peoples of Paraguay started with the foundation of the DAI (*Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas*) in 1958. The main objective of the department was to incorporate the indigenous population into "civilized society", and to lodge and concentrate them in "well-organized colonies" (BPD, 1980, p. 10; Prieto, 1989). The DAI was part of the Ministry of Defense, which clearly illustrates the way in which the policy with respect to the Indian people was related to the maintenance of national security. The policy of the DAI was simply aimed at the "solution of the indigenous problem", and neglected Indian collectivism, spiritualism, ethnicity, rights, and culture (BPD, 1980, p. 10).

All in all it is clear that until the 1960s, the Paraguayan government tried to incorporate the Indian people of the country into national society. Those Indians who were not ready for integration, or were unwilling to adapt themselves to national values and standards, were to reside in segregated settlements.

Towards the end of the 1960s, the position of the Paraguayan Chaco Indians became more and more precarious. Incorporation and occupation of the area occurred at an increasing pace and the Indians gradually lost access to their hunting territory. A large portion of the Indians were working as labourers for the white landholders in the area. Jobs were often temporary and wages were incredibly low. Other Indian groups had settled more or less permanently on land owned by the missions. In some cases, settlement programmes had started to settle the

Indians and to persuade them to become farmers. The majority of the Indians still resided on land owned by the national state or by private landholders. There, their tenancy on the land was insecure and illegal. Health-care and education were more or less absent.

The privatization of the land not only created insurmountable problems with respect to the economic survival of the Indians, but also disturbed them socially and culturally. Land, which to them was a collective resource that had to be treated with respect and care, had passed into private hands, and many Indian communities were forced to leave their homelands.

In the 1970s, public opinion with regard to the indigenous population of Paraguay began to change. Some people realized that the Indians had an historical right to own land and to continue their traditional mode of life. In 1973, the *Asociación Indigenista Paraguaya*, the AIP, started preparations for legislation that should safeguard the cultural and economic survival of the Paraguayan Indians. Legal possession of land by the Indian communities was considered to have first priority; once the communities had access to sufficient land in order to regain economic and cultural strength, other problems would solve themselves with time.

Paraguayan law of the day, however, did not recognize collective landownership. Ownership was restricted to individuals with legal authorization. The Indians, who were not registered with the government, could not be landholders unless they were listed on the civil register (BPD, 1980, p. 5). The objective of the AIP with the promulgation of an indigenist legislation was precisely to exempt the Indian population from this requirement, and legalize Indian collective landownership. Community based landownership was considered to be more consonant with Indian culture and tradition.

Other problems had to be solved at the same time. Firstly, Indian common law, *el derecho consuetudinario*, had to be accepted as legally valid and legislation should consider the social and cultural background of the Indians. Secondly, the Indians would not have the money to buy the land once the legal obstacles had been removed, so the land should be handed over to them without payment. The Paraguayan government would have to finance the transference. Thirdly, an organization should be created for the task of implementing the indigenist legislation and managing the transference of land to Indian communities.

Preparations took time, but finally in 1978 the AIP and other groups that had supported the movement, were able to present a bill

(ENM, 1987, pp. 35-40). In December 1981, *Ley 904, El Estatuto de las Comunidades Indígenas* was enacted in Paraguay. The final content of this act was more or less in accordance with the propositions of the AIP, although two crucial passages, relating to *el derecho consuetudinario indígena* and a special fund for the Indian communities, were left out (Chase-Sardi, 1987, p. 267).

Argentine policy with respect to the indigenous people of the Gran Chaco can be subdivided into four phases (Bertone, 1985, p. 13; Bray, 1989, p. 2). Up to about 1885, the Indians in the Argentine Gran Chaco were looked upon as enemies, who menaced the lives of the colonists and who detained economic development. Government policy was mainly directed towards the oppression of the indigenous inhabitants of the region and towards the defence of national borders. A chain of military fortresses was established along the rivers in the northern part of the Chaco. The land which the military troops conquered from the Indians, fell to the Argentine state and was partly sold to foreign colonists and investors.

Government policy from 1885 to 1925 was characterized by efforts to subject the Chaco Indians. The Indians frequently offered resistance which occasionally resulted in violent conflicts. The military was sent in several times and campaigns were started to suppress the Indian revolts. At the same time, however, it became evident that the Indian population could be usefully employed in the region's economic development. In order to guarantee the entrepreneurs in the region a sufficient and reliable workforce, the Indians were to reside in neatly organized colonies where they were at beck and call. Several acts were promulgated during this period to implement this government policy and to establish Indian *reducciones* in the Gran Chaco. Other acts explicitly set out the conditions of Indian employment (Bertone, 1985, p. 18). As a result of Argentine policy, several Indian colonies and *reducciones* were founded. Many of these settlements were in contact with missionaries who started to support the Indian people who had lost access to their hunting territory. Some of the colonies were named *Reservas Aborígenes* by means of presidential decrees. The reserved areas were created to protect the Indian colonies against the advancing agricultural frontier, because in the first decades of the 20th century the interest of colonists and speculators in the cheap land of the Gran Chaco increased drastically. As the number of colonists in the Argentine Gran Chaco increased, however, the area occupied by Indian *reducciones* and

colonies, with and without legal status as reserved areas, decreased.

After about 1925, Argentine indigenist policy shifted from segregation and settlement, towards integration. The interest of the parliament in the indigenous peoples of the country increased and a census was held among the Indians in order to get a clear picture of the situation with respect to this ethnic and cultural minority. Governmental policy from then on aimed to integrate the Indian people into "civilized society" and to transform them into useful participants in the regional economy. Within this policy, the Indian communities were still excluded from legal landownership. The colonies that had been established, remained in the hands of the state. Nevertheless, some changes did occur in this respect. Decree 2.964, 14th of March 1958, for instance, stated that Indian communities could obtain the usufruct of the public land. Embedded in the same decree, however, were a number of conditions that had to be fulfilled by the Indian people in order to be granted the right of usufruct. In 1961, decree 2.211, 22th of March, these conditions were specified. The decree dictated that: the Indians should live and stay permanently on the land which they held in usufruct and they should not lease the land nor keep other people's animals on it. Furthermore, usufruct was granted personally and could not be sold, given away nor lent. The right could only pass on to children by inheritance (de la Cruz, 1989b, pp. 21-2). In 1958, the national government of Argentina founded the DNAI *(Dirección Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas)*. This department of Indian affairs was established to co-ordinate policy relating to the indigenous population of the country and to control observance of the indigenist acts and decrees (Bertone, 1985, p. 21; Serbín, 1981, p. 414). In 1959, Argentina ratified the treaty, accepted by the Confederation of the International Labour Organization, concerning the assistance for indigenous peoples. Argentina's ratification of the ILO treaty resulted in the promulgation of national statute 14.932. The aim of this statute was the protection and integration of all tribal people in the country (de la Cruz, 1989a, pp. 21-22; de la Cruz, 1989b, p. 9). Additionally, the statute made reference to a restitution of land to Indian communities. The procedures of land transference set out in the act, however, were extremely vague and tentative.

At the end of the 1970s, Argentinean policy and public opinion in relation to the indigenous population of the country entered a new stage. The ancient culture, tradition and history of the nation was revalued and the Indians were increasingly regarded as the ancestors of the Argentine

people. Several authors seem to confirm the revaluation of the country's indigenous cultures. Bertone (1985, p. 22), for instance, points out that Indian policy in the 1980s was characterized by a *revalorización de la cultura indígena*, while Machuca (1986, p. 1) pleaded for a *reparación histórica de una antigua injusticia*. The "revaluation of Indian culture" and the "rectification of an historical injustice", however, did not immediately materialize and a change of indigenist policy failed to come. Argentina at that time, was governed by a military *junta* and the political climate of the county offered little opportunity for emancipation of the poor and a redistribution of wealth. During the military dictatorship, the indigenous population of the country was ignored, as was the legal debate that was going on in Paraguay to find a solution for the economic, social and cultural problems of these people. When the democratic government of Raoul Alfonsín was installed in 1983, the social and political climate of the country changed radically. Socio-economic programs like the PAN, *Programa de Alimentación Nacional*, were started for the poor, including the Indians, and public thought became dominated by the *nunca más* campaign. With respect to the Indian population, a new consciousness dawned. The cultural inheritance of the Argentine people was revalued and measures were taken to save what was left of the nation's cultural history.

The first tangible result of the revised approach to "the Indian problem" was the promulgation of act 426, *Ley Integral del Aborigen* by the province of Formosa in the year 1984. This law was the first Argentine indigenist land act and in fact was more or less a copy of the Paraguayan act 904/81. Other provincial governments followed. In 1986 Salta promulgated act 6.373, *Ley Provincial de Promoción y Desarrollo del Aborigen*, and in 1987 the province of Chaco enacted *Ley 3.258, Ley de las Comunidades Indígenas*. To co-ordinate the provincial activities with respect to the Indian population and its land claims, the national government had in 1985 enacted *Ley 23.302, Ley sobre Política Indígena y Apoyo a Comunidades Aborígenes*. The intention was to present a framework to the provincial governments in order to create a coherent policy.

In the following I focus attention on these five statutes. Although there are, as will later become clear, some important dissimilarities between these acts and their implications, the conformity is such, that they can be evaluated as a whole.

The indigenist land acts of Paraguay, Argentina and the three

northern provinces of Argentina, Formosa, Chaco and Salta, are characterized by two different themes. On the one hand the statutes are concerned with the transference of land to Indian communities, on the other hand they offer an institutional framework for their execution and control. These themes are discussed separately, beginning with the transference of land.

Considering the articles in the statutes that refer to the legal transference of land to the Indian communities, three aspects seem to be of major importance:

1. How should Indian communities put forward their request for land according to the statutes?
2. Which areas are eligible for transference to the Indian communities?
3. What is indicated in the statutes concerning the extent of transferable land?

The first question is answered by perusing the application procedures set out in the statutes. The first striking fact is that the Indians cannot possess land unless their community has been granted legal recognition. Customary Indian law and its concepts of organization and community are still not accepted as legally valid.

Apart from act 6.373/86 of Salta which does not pay any attention to this legal recognition, the statutes dictate a number of detailed conditions that have to be fulfilled by the Indian communities in order to obtain the status of *personería jurídica*. Information on the geographical location occupied by the community, names, sexes and ages of all members, names of the leaders and the legitimacy of their position, and other data are requested.

Once the communities have been granted legal recognition, they are recorded in the central register of population and the leaders have to put forward a request for a specific piece of land. Therefore, they have to address themselves to the indigenist institution that is charged with enacting the statute. When the request is granted by the institution, the land will be surveyed and finally transferred without cost.

Although the Indian communities do have the opportunity to become legal owners of the land, some restrictions remain in force. For instance, in Paraguay and Formosa, the Indians can never sell the land or use it as a security to obtain credit. In the provinces of Salta and Chaco, for periods of ten and twenty years respectively (the latter with

the possibility of prolongation by the IDACH) the Indian communities are not allowed to sell the land or use it for credit security.

With respect to the second question - as to what areas are eligible for transference to Indian communities - the statutes are more divergent.

The acts of Formosa and of Chaco have in common that only public land and areas formerly reserved for Indians are considered to be transferable. The acts of Paraguay, Salta and the national act of Argentina also include private land that on certain occasions can be expropriated by the Indian institution in order to allot the land to Indian communities. In this respect the Paraguayan act 904/81 is the most radical. Landholders who encounter Indians on their land have to report this to the INDI within 90 days (article 66). Thereupon, the INDI decides whether or not to start an expropriation procedure. Up to now, however, expropriation of private landholders in favour of Indian communities in the Gran Chaco, has seldom occurred.

According to the law of the province of Chaco, only present-day locations of the Indian communities are eligible for transference. The other acts also include former dwelling places of the ethnic groups concerned. Finally, in all cases a possibility of removal to other locations in the region is embodied in the statutes when, for some reason, the requested land is not available. During the past few years, this has become especially relevant in the Argentine provinces of Formosa and Chaco where territorial conflicts between Indian communities and oil companies have arisen.

With respect to the third question - the extent of transferable land - the statutes without exception remain vague. The land should offer the communities a "life in dignity and economic independence". Consequently, the extent will always be considered in relation to land use, available resources and current mode of exploitation. How much land is needed for a life in dignity and economic independence remains obscure, and only the Paraguayan act 904/81 gives an estimation of 100 hectares for each Indian family living in the Paraguayan Chaco (de la Cruz, 1989b, pp. 12-3; INDI, 1985a, p. 3).

Briefly and somewhat simplified these are the contents of the indigenist statutes concerning the transference of land to the Indian people of the Gran Chaco.

The other recurrent theme in the acts is the establishment of

national and provincial indigenist institutions. The following institutions are currently charged with the enforcement of the provincial and national indigenist statutes:

Paraguay	INDI	*Instituto Paraguayo del Indígena*
Argentina	INAI	*Instituto Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas*
Chaco	IDACH	*Instituto del Aborigen Chaqueña*
Salta	IPA	*Instituto Provincial de Aborígenes*
Formosa	ICA	*Instituto de las Comunidades Aborígenes*

According to the indigenist statutes, these institutions are responsible for the following tasks:

- enforcing the indigenist act.
- incorporating the Indian communities and their leaders in the central register of population.
- co-ordinating and supporting Indian activities.
- representing the Indian communities and their interests to national and international, governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- contacting other indigenous organizations in- and outside the country.
- supporting health-care, education and employment for the Indian population.
- registering Indian land-claims.
- granting the Indian communities the status of *personería jurídica.*
- surveying the requested Indian territories.
- promulgating the official transference of land.

Considering the tasks of the institutions, it is astonishing that nothing is said about sanctions. In fact, there is a gap in the statutes when it comes to the measures that have to be undertaken by the institutions in case the acts are not observed.

Finally, with respect to the administrative structure of the institutions, it is legislated that indigenous officials should hold positions of major responsibility. The exact form of this structure diverges in the different statutes.

In taking a retrospective view of indigenist policy in Argentina and Paraguay, it is obvious that the governments have never paid much attention to the Gran Chaco. The region has always been of little economic value and its population remained sparse. Accordingly, until

the 1970s, a clear policy with respect to the indigenous people of the region was never framed. Those governmental measures that were effected in the region, on the whole, were arranged at short notice, uncontrolled, fragmentary, and *ad hoc*.

Nevertheless, a few trends can be distinguished in the manner in which the governments approached the indigenous people of the country, and more specifically, of the Gran Chaco. Roughly put, the policy shifted from genocide and confining the Indians to small colonies, to forced integration and incorporation in the regional economy. At the end of the 1970s, the policy changed radically.

At that time, the crucial problem of the Indian people was restricted access to landownership. There were two major legislative obstacles. Firstly, Paraguayan and Argentine law did not allow collective ownership which was aspired to by the Indian communities, and secondly, the Indian communities were not legally registered and therefore could not purchase land.

In the 1980s, a number of indigenist land statutes were promulgated in order to remove these obstacles. Nowadays, the Indian communities in the Gran Chaco in principle have the opportunity to acquire land in collective ownership.

3.4 The spatial marginalization of the Gran Chaco Indians

The foregoing clearly indicates that access to land is currently one of the most acute problems of the Indian people in the Gran Chaco. The fact that extensive parts of the region have fallen into the hands of foreign investors, speculators, farmers and ranchers, has resulted in a spatial marginalization of the Indian population. Economic and cultural problems, which are increasingly manifest among the Indian people in the region, are for the larger part attributable to the loss of land.

Given the importance of spatial aspects in the current economic and cultural position of the Indian people, it is useful to analyze the concept of spatial marginalization more thoroughly.

Spatially marginalized refers to those people who have been forced to dwell in areas which are quantitatively and/or qualitatively insufficient to meet their needs, and those people who reside on land which they do not own and who are confronted with the threat of displacement. For indigenous peoples one more aspect should be added to this definition. Indigenous groups that reside in areas which do not

coincide with that which they traditionally occupied, and who consequently feel cut off from their traditional and cultural background, also find themselves in a spatially marginalized position.

From this definition four crucial aspects of spatial marginalization can be derived. These aspects provide an analytical framework to evaluate the current position of the Indian people of the Gran Chaco.

1. Security of land rights

Of major importance to the spatial position taken by the Indians is the security of tenancy rights. As a result of the incorporation of the Gran Chaco, most Indian communities in the region have been confronted with the threat of losing access to their land. The extent to which the Indian communities are able to defend their tenancy rights against dispossession by competitive colonists varies substantially. From this particular point of view, Indian land occupancy in the Gran Chaco can be subdivided into the following six categories:

- Indian communities that reside on the property of private landholders.
- Indian communities that dwell on land owned by the national state of Paraguay or Argentina.
- Indian communities that dwell in areas which were reserved for them during the first decades of this century (*Reservas Aborígenes*).
- Indian communities that live on land owned by one of the religious missions in the region.
- Indian communities that have obtained a communal property title of the land.
- Indian communities that have subdivided their land into individual plots now individually owned by families.

Formal Indian land tenure largely determines the effectiveness of Indian claims on land. In addition to formal tenure, however, two other aspects seem to be significant. Firstly, Indian land can only be defended against entire or partial occupancy or dispossession by foreign settlers in the case where fences demarcate the precise location of the area involved. Fencing in the Gran Chaco, however, is a costly and time-consuming affair. Secondly, in order to respect formal Indian land tenure, provincial and national authorities have to watch over Indian rights and interests. In some remote parts of the Gran Chaco, however, where administrative officials are absent, the "law of the jungle" prevails.

2. Quantity

Another aspect of spatial marginalization is the area which is available for the Indian people. For several years, a debate has been going on about the question of how much land is needed to guarantee the economic and cultural survival of the Indian tribes in the Gran Chaco. Opinions differ substantially in this respect. Those who picture the future Indian communities in agricultural colonies where they cultivate crops for the market claim that an average of one hundred hectares of Chaco land for each Indian family will be sufficient for them to survive. Others, who advocate an Indian mode of life in which traditional, cultural elements and a diversified economy have a place, hold the view that an area of at least 500 hectares must be assigned to each Indian family.

3. Quality

Spatial marginalization is also closely linked to the potentialities of the land on which the Indian people dwell, or, in other words, the quality of the land involved. It goes without saying that the quality of land is closely bound to the manner in which the land is used. Agricultural activities depend on soil fertility and soil structure, livestock production is served by the presence of natural pastures, while hunting and gathering will only be profitable in areas where a great variety in flora and fauna is available. Quality of land in the Gran Chaco can never be discussed without including the availability of water in that particular area. Land without sufficient fresh water will not suffice for any mode of exploitation. Given the fact that precipitation in the region is low and unevenly spread over the year, land without an additional supply of water, such as rivers, lagoons or wells, will at least be costly to cultivate.

4. Location

The last part of the definition of spatial marginalization refers to the location of Indian areas. The Indian peoples of the Gran Chaco have, as so many indigenous people all over the world, a special relationship with their dwelling place. Land, from an Indian point of view, carries a highly symbolic, cultural and religious meaning and is congruous to the repository of their ancestors and the origin of the tribe. Therefore, the majority of Indians in the Gran Chaco prefer to acquire land in the region where their ethnic group originally resided. Indian communities that have been forced to settle outside their traditional territories,

generally feel culturally and emotionally uprooted. Another crucial aspect of location, which is directly related to the economic prospects of the area, is its attainability. In vast parts of the region, traffic is severely hindered by a lack of roads and railways. Marketing of agricultural products or cattle in distant cities can also be seriously hindered by the high costs for transport, which moreover can be very unreliable.

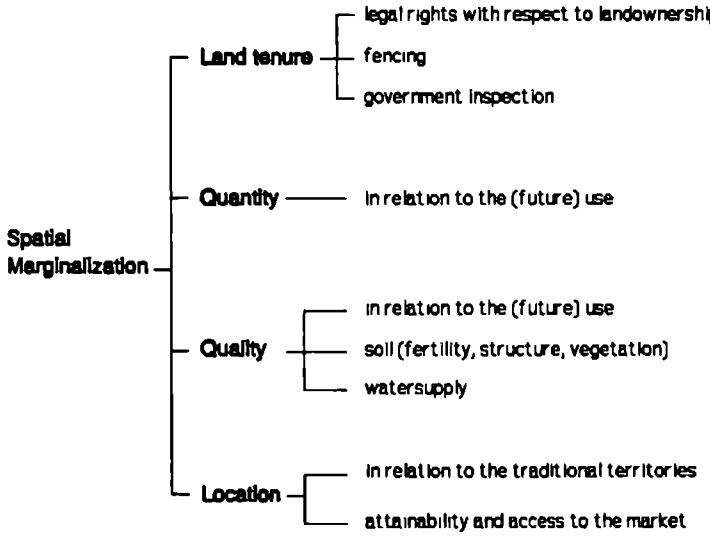


Figure 3.1 Aspects of spatial marginalization

In the foregoing I have touched briefly upon the four major aspects of Indian spatial marginalization. I elaborate on these themes more thoroughly in chapter ten after having presented six case studies of Indian communities in the Gran Chaco. The cases are selected in such a way as to cover the six alternatives of Indian land tenure in the region. Access to land for the Indian population of the Gran Chaco and the extent to which they have been spatially marginalized, conceived according to figure 3.1, will be a continuous thread throughout the six case studies.

3.5 Conclusion

In the preceding sections, three themes have been described. In the first part of the chapter, I focused on indigenous people in a global context. In spite of all cultural, social and economic variations of these indigenous peoples, some remarkable similarities become apparent, especially as far as land use and tenure are concerned.

Some indigenous peoples make a living by means of hunting and gathering activities. Consequently, nomadism, in varying degrees, is widely spread among these people. Furthermore, hunting and gathering societies tend to consider land not as a commodity which can be possessed and exploited, but as a part of nature, available for communal use.

The first section concluded with a presentation of five strategies for government policy with respect to indigenous peoples and their traditional territories. Although the chronological order of these five alternatives is disturbed in some cases, most governments have shifted their policy from genocide and ethnocide, to concentrating the indigenous peoples in small labour camps, colonies or reservations. Some governments have recently handed over parts of national territory to their indigenous inhabitants.

Section three gave a general sketch of Paraguayan and Argentinean legislation with regard to the Indian people of these countries. It is clear that Argentinean and Paraguayan policy in a broad sense pursued the strategies presented in the first part of the chapter. The policy has resulted in the enactment of several national and provincial indigenist land statutes which enable the Indian communities to acquire land in collective ownership. Although these statutes are without exception of non-Indian origin, they seem to correspond with the specific needs of indigenous people. The fact, however, that the indigenist land statutes nowadays enable Indian communities to obtain legal landownership does not immediately imply that all communities in the Gran Chaco by now have acquired the titles of their land. I have deliberately put off an evaluation of effectiveness of these particular statutes until final comments can be made based on the case studies presented in the following chapters.

The last part of this chapter was devoted to the concept of spatial marginalization in relation to access to land for indigenous peoples. Tenure, area, quality and location appear to be the main elements of spatial marginalization. I ended the section by presenting an analytical

framework based on an elaboration of these four aspects. During the presentation of the case studies, I will avail myself of this framework in analyzing current Indian access to land.

3.6 An introduction to the case studies

Now that the historical context of the study has been defined, I will try to get a more detailed picture of the present situation in which the Gran Chaco Indians find themselves.

The six case studies presented in the following chapters cover the six forms mentioned in section 3.4 of Indian land tenure in the Gran Chaco region. The case studies are not supposed to cover all Indian communities within the specific categories of land tenure. The approach is illustrative in character, providing a detailed description of only one community out of each category. Each community is of course unique. The selection of the communities was based mainly on practical considerations such as accessability and availability of contacts and background information. Also taken into account, however, was the geographical distribution and the ethnic variety of the six communities.

I obtained the information used to compose the following chapters from various sources. Firstly, all six Indian communities were visited for some time in the second half of 1991 and the beginning of 1992 in order to collect primary field data. In all communities, ten interviews were held with Indian households. The households were selected at random, although the sample was taken in such a way as to not exclude the leader of the village or neighbourhood, and to spread the interviews as much as possible over the sex and age categories. The request for co-operation with the study was met positively, all households were friendly and open.

In addition to the interviews with the Indian households, so called key-informants like schoolteachers, missionaries, government employers and anthropologists, were interviewed as well. The information obtained from the key-informants was used to back up and complete the impression derived from the household interviews. Contradicting opinions or data were thoroughly clarified.

Simultaneously with the fieldwork, secondary data with respect to the case studies was collected by perusing newspaper records, maps and scientific reports. This data was used to consolidate the historical background of the selected communities and to widen the analytical

perspective of the study as a whole.

Although several social, economic and cultural aspects of the six Indian communities will be briefly mentioned, access to land and formal landownership will be the central issue throughout the succeeding chapters.

Map 3.1 Locations of the areas in the case studies

4. OCCUPIERS OF PRIVATE LAND: THE NIVAKLÉ OF LOMA PYTÁ

4.1 Introduction

In recent decades, land conflicts between Indian communities and private landowners in western Paraguay and north-western Argentina have become increasingly manifest. The privatization of land in the Gran Chaco reduced the area in which Indian people could wander and live from hunting, gathering, fishing and gardening.

The Nivaklé of Loma Pytá can serve as an example of those Indian groups who have lost legal access to their land. At the beginning of the 20th century, livestock farmers purchased substantial areas in the lower parts of the Paraguayan Chaco and started their ranches. Nowadays the Nivaklé of Loma Pytá are illegally squatting on a private estate where they are tolerated by the owner.

4.2 Indian occupiers of private land

As was illustrated in chapter two, vast areas in the Gran Chaco were sold to farmers, ranchers, lumber companies and speculators. As a consequence, many indigenous groups suddenly found themselves living on other people's land. Some were evicted immediately by the landowners and had to take refuge on state land or had to settle in one of the missions in the near vicinity. In other cases, the owners felt no hurry to drive away the Indians but were on the contrary pleased with the cheap workforce so close at hand. Sometimes the presence of Indians was more or less ignored by the owners since the land was only marginally used or even not used at all.

To this day, a certain number of Indian communities reside on private property.[1] The actual number of groups living under such

[1] Indian communities residing on land purchased by one of the Churches or NGOs also live on private properties but are not taken into consideration in this chapter. These communities are discussed in chapter seven.

insecure conditions is hard to estimate. The fact that these Indians never know whether they can stay where they are or will have to leave the property in the near future, makes the existence of these communities extremely instable. Those Indian groups that have no land which they can call their own, be it formally recognized or not, are regularly on the move. Searching for work and a place to live quietly, the community as a whole, or sometimes only part of it, migrates from one cattle ranch to another, or from ranches to state land or a missionary outpost.

Probably the largest number of Indian communities living on private land is to be found in the lower parts of the Paraguayan Chaco. This *Chaco Bajo* is known for its extensively used, large cattle ranches. Many Indian communities, mainly of the Mascoyan linguistic family, live and work more or less permanently on these ranches (ENM, 1984, p. 167).

In earlier days, this part of the Chaco was intensely exploited for its huge reserves of *quebracho* trees which were used for the production of hardwood and tannin. Then, many Indians had already migrated towards the Paraguay river where they could work for the *quebracho* industries. In the late 1940s, when the *quebracho* companies sold their land to cattle ranchers or themselves started livestock production, the Indian labourers immediately started working on these ranches. Chase-Sardi, Brun and Enciso (1990, p. 97) estimate that in 1990, 13 Mascoy communities lived on ranches in the lower Chaco.

The most conspicuous example in this respect is the Mascoy community Riacho Mosquito which tried to gain ownership of a part of its traditional land. The land was the property of Carlos Casado S.A., the largest landholder in Paraguayan history. In 1979, the Mascoy Indians, 300 families, asked for 30,000 hectares of land, only 2% of the present-day property of the Argentine company. The Mascoy were former labourers of Carlos Casado S.A. At the time of their request for land, the Mascoy lived in distress, without jobs and without land. Although Casado did not actually use the land and in fact had offered it for sale abroad, he refused to sell the 30,000 hectares to the indigenist institution. It took eight years of intense political pressure from religious and other non-governmental organizations to activate the Paraguayan government. In 1987, the government started procedures to expropriate the estate, and finally, on the 24th of July 1988, the Mascoy Indians became the owners of the land (DIM, 1987(2), pp. 8-9; Hoy, 17-6-88, p. 30; Última Hora, 10-3-90, p. 21).

Of course there are also Indian communities living on privately

owned land in other parts of the Gran Chaco. The number, however, is relatively small, due to the fact that in many other regions where the land has been sold, land use is more intensive. In the central part of the Argentine province of Chaco, for instance, large areas were privatized in the 1920s in order to promote a large scale colonization programme in which small-scale cotton farmers took part (Iñigo Carrera, 1983, pp. 73-5). The colonists received only small plots and therefore most of them did not tolerate the presence of Indians on their land. The same is true for the Mennonite colonies. The Mennonites use their land intensively and consequently seldom allow Indian communities to settle in their fields and pastures. Apparently, large estate holders are more likely to house Indian groups, while smallholders generally do not tolerate them.

On the whole, living conditions within the communities on private estates show a remarkable similarity. With respect to land tenure, the position of the Indians is insecure, depending entirely on the whim of the landholder. Continuously running the risk of expulsion, it is impossible for the Indians to invest in housing and infrastructure.

Usually, a tiny piece of land is marked out for the Indian villages and often the Indians are not allowed to cross other parts of the ranch. This makes it extremely difficult for them to hunt and gather near their settlement. Their agriculture is disturbed by the fact that the cattle of the landholder generally runs free, destroying the gardens. Likewise, the ranchers often forbid the Indian communities to raise livestock themselves as they want to reserve all pasture for their own cattle. For income, the Indians therefore largely depend on paid work like fencing, clearing land and herding cattle on the ranch. Working conditions are often bad and wages extremely low. In most cases, schooling facilities and health care are absent (ENM, 1984, p. 170; Maybury-Lewis and Howe, 1980, pp. 57-9).

In order to fully understand the Indian occupancy of privately owned land, the concept needs to be differentiated. Besides, it is important to take into consideration the legal implications of this specific mode of land tenure.

Indian communities residing on privately owned land can be classified in three categories (de la Cruz, 1989a, p. 12). Firstly, a number of communities can be characterized as "actual occupiers". These groups live on private land without the owner's knowledge. Most communities of actual occupiers reside on large estates that have not yet been put into full use, often with absent landlords. In some cases, the

Indians are themselves not aware of the fact that their land has been sold to others.

The second category consists of Indian communities which reside on land of private estate holders who, at least for the time being, approve of the Indian settlement on their land. In most cases, the Indians work for the landholder who in exchange offers them a piece of land to live on. In this manner, the landowner safeguards his workforce without having to compete for it with other employers in the region. Usually problems arise when the number of Indian families within the community increases by natural growth and migration. The employer is no longer able to offer jobs to all, poverty increases and social unrest may break out. The result is often that the landowner drives off the entire community.

Thirdly, a number of Indian communities live in private areas, although the owners disapprove of their stay on the land. Numerous examples illustrate the conflicts between landholders and unwanted Indian occupiers (see e.g Chase-Sardi, 1972, pp. 202-3; El Diario, 12-7-90, p. 28; Rodríguez, 1975, pp. 14-22; Última Hora, 14-8-90, p. 17). In virtually all cases, the result of the conflict is that the Indians either leave the place calmly without offering resistance, or that they are threatened for a long period and finally violently evicted.

Analyzing Indian occupancy of private areas from a legal point of view, I note that this mode of Indian land tenure is not incorporated in present-day Paraguayan and Argentine legislation. There is a complete lack of regulation with respect to the rights of Indian occupiers living under these circumstances.

Referring again to the five statutes that were discussed briefly in the preceding chapter: legislation either maintains a silence on the subject of occupancy, as is the case in the Argentine provinces of Chaco and Formosa, or induces a radical change in land tenure for the Indian groups that reside on privatized land. Expropriation of private lands as a legal instrument put forward in favour of the Indian occupiers, is incorporated in the statutes of Paraguay, Argentina and the province of Salta (Paraguay, act 904/81, art. 24-7; Argentina, act 23.302/85, art. 8; Salta, act 6.373/86, art. 14).

Although not mentioned at all in the indigenist land statutes, expropriation of private land is only politically feasible in cases where

the land concerned is not being "rationally" exploited by its owner.[2] Besides, it is required that the Indian occupiers have been living on the estate for quite some time. They can not claim private land, not even their former territories, unless they already actually reside on the land.

Expropriation always implies (again, not explicitly set out in the Argentine statute 23.302/85 and the statute 6.373/86 of Salta) that the landowner is reimbursed. This raises an obstacle because the indigenist institutions, charged with the implementation of the statutes, either lack the financial means to pay for the land, or do not wish to spend a considerable part of their budget on expropriation procedures.

All in all, expropriation, as an expedient to improve the position of Indian occupiers, is hindered by its political delicacy, the insufficient specification of the instrument in present-day legislation, and the absence of budgets to compensate the landowners.

The most obvious alternative, instead of going through all political and legal procedures in order to expropriate land, is to purchase it in a conventional way. Given the fact, however, that compensation claims in cases of expropriation are often already more than the indigenist institutions can afford, additional funds are required. In a number of cases, religious and other non-governmental organizations have financially supported the institutions in raising the necessary funds to buy the land for the Indians. Some landowners have abused this opportunity and asked for absurd amounts of money for their land, knowing that some foreign organizations and Churches have large amounts of funds at their disposal.

In all, the most outstanding effect of present-day legislation with respect to Indian land occupancy in the Gran Chaco is precisely the potentiality of expropriating land in order to meet Indian rights and land claims. Expropriation, however, implies both positive and negative consequences for Indians living on private land. On the one hand, some communities have by means of expropriation become legally registered owners of land they formerly occupied illegally. On the other hand, many landholders, afraid of losing their land to the Indians, are no longer inclined to tolerate inhabitants on their land. Since the promulgation of the indigenist land statutes, the number of private estates where Indians can reside more or less permanently has strongly

[2] The Paraguayan *Estatuto Agrario* of 1963 indicates that "rational exploitation" means that total investment in the improvement of the land amounts to more than 50% of the land's fiscal value (Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 124).

diminished. In Salta, landowners sometimes try to avoid expropriation by handing over tiny pieces of marginal land to the inhabitants. The Indians often accept the "gift" and in this way forfeit their legal right to claim further land (de la Cruz, 1989b, p. 12).

Following these general remarks with respect to Indian communities that reside on privatized land in the Gran Chaco, I will continue with a detailed study of one of these communities: a group of Nivaklé living on the ranch Loma Pytá in the Paraguayan Chaco.

4.3 The Nivaklé of Loma Pytá

The cattle ranch Loma Pytá, "Red Earth" in Guaraní, is situated in the interior of the Paraguayan Chaco, in the department of Presidente Hayes, some 14 kilometres south of the road which leads from Pozo Colorado to General Díaz.

In 1948, Loma Pytá was purchased by Germans, the descendants of whom still own the property. In 1989, the rancher who had bought the land died and his son took control over the estate which by then measured some 27,000 hectares of cleared land and numbered 13,000 head of Hereford cattle. The land of Loma Pytá seems perfectly suited for livestock raising, for two small rivers cross the estate (see map 4.2). By manipulating the river courses, parts of the estate are intentionally inundated from time to time. As a result, the lower areas and dried out lakes fill up with water providing the cattle with watering places. Especially during the artificial inundations demand for labour reaches a peak, because then the land is manually cleared from bushes and shrubs. Loma Pytá is a successfully run enterprise and its enormous area of land has been put into full use.

From the very beginning, Indian labour from wandering communities has been employed in Loma Pytá. In the course of time, more and more Indian families choose Loma Pytá as their semi-permanent residence and at the end of 1991, some fifty Nivaklé families were living on the ranch. Some thirty more families belonged to the community but resided temporarily elsewhere.

The Indian community in Loma Pytá in fact is a mixed community. The majority of the Indians belong to the Nivaklé group, but in August 1991, six Macá and two Lengua were living in the community as well. The group as a whole forms part of the Nivaklé

band "Tavashai Llavos" which in Nivaklé means: "people from the swamps". The original name of the community is "Casrososstuj Ihatsa" (Regehr, 1985, p. 2; Última Hora, 1-5-90, p. 24).

The Nivaklé who now reside on Loma Pytá were either born on the estate or have been living there for a long time.[3] Those who were born elsewhere have lived on other ranches in the lower Chaco from which they were evicted by the landlords long ago.[4]

The Nivaklé belong to the Matacoyan linguistic family. Sometimes they are referred to as "Chulupí" or "Ashluslay", names given them by white settlers and travellers. The Indians call themselves "Nivaklé", which in their language means "People".

The Nivaklé originally lived in a large area along the Pilcomayo river, located for the greater part in Paraguay (see map 1.2). From the five bands of Nivaklé, three lived close to the river while two bands wandered about more to the north (Klassen, 1991, p. 61). The Nivaklé have always migrated within their territory and they sometimes even temporarily moved out of their area. Up to about 1945, for instance, many Nivaklé went to north-western Argentina every winter to find employment in the harvesting of sugar cane. By spring, all bands returned to the Pilcomayo.

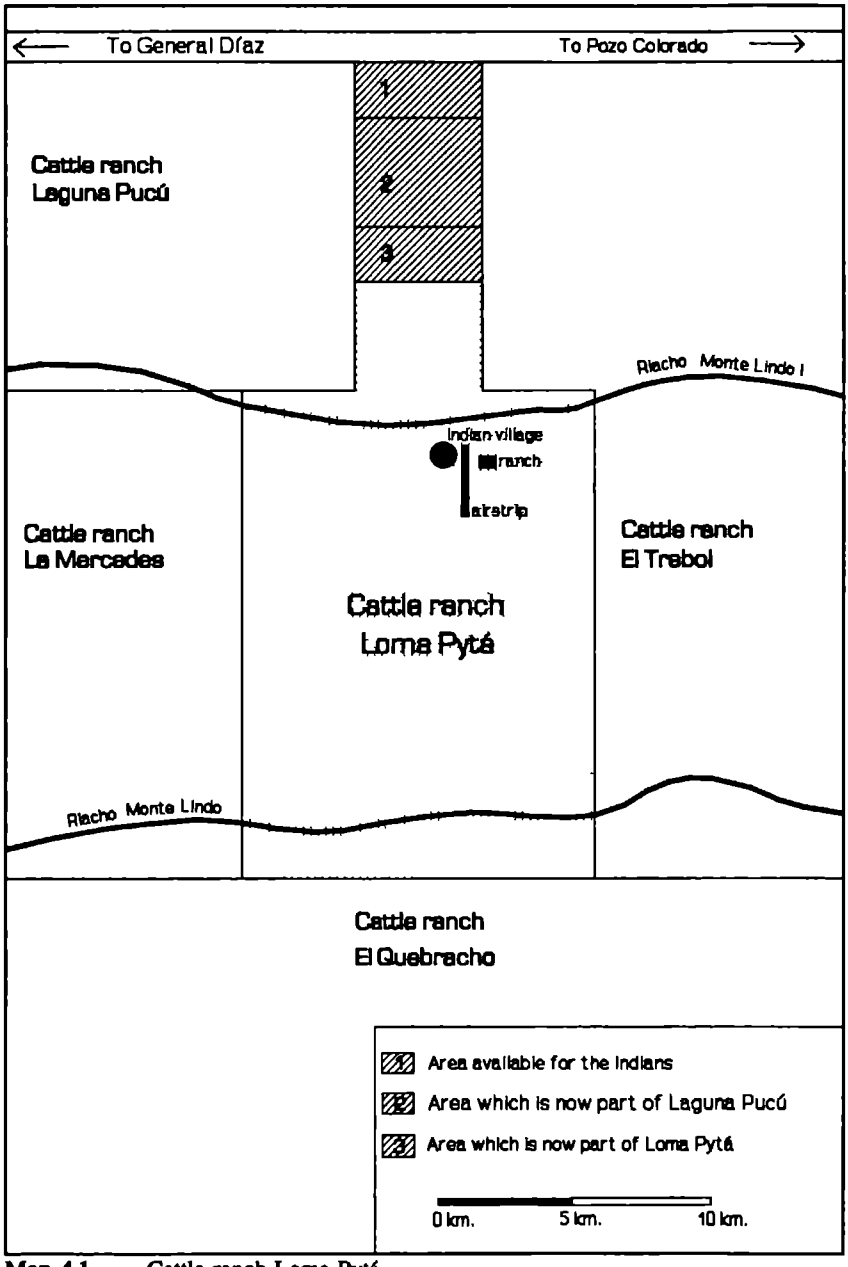
During the post-war era, from 1935 onwards, the Nivaklé communities were confronted with the fact that large parts of their ancestral land were being put into use by the new owners. Hunting, gathering, fishing and gardening, the Nivaklé's traditional economic activities, became increasingly difficult. Conflicts with the new landlords soon occurred.

Some groups of Nivaklé reacted to the privatization by migrating to the Mennonite colonies where it was easier to find jobs and places to settle. Other groups stayed in their homeland and, deprived of resources, started working for the ranchers. Of the communities that stayed in the region, the majority have managed to get hold of a piece of land. Although not as large as their ancestral area, these Nivaklé have land of

---

[3] To simplify matters I will refer to the Indians on Loma Pytá as Nivaklé acknowledging that some of them stem from other ethnic groups.

[4] Most of the information used to compose this chapter was collected in August 1991 when a short period of fieldwork was conducted on Loma Pytá. Ten interviews with Indian households were held with the help of the two schoolteachers from the Indian village who rendered assistance as interpreters.



Map 4.1 Cattle ranch Loma Pytá

their own and the titles secure them against expulsion.

Recent estimations indicate that the total number of Nivaklé amounts to 11,000, of which some 500 live in Argentina.

The Nivaklé of Loma Pytá do not have land of their own. Instead, they depend on the proprietor of the ranch who in fact is one of the very few landowners in the lower Chaco who permit Indians to live on their land.

The Indian village of Loma Pytá is located a stone's throw from the ranch buildings on the other side of the airstrip. The Indians live in about forty houses set out in a few clusters on a sandy plain and surrounded by shrubs. The houses are made of palms, grass, clay and sometimes plastic. In the middle of the village is a small, brick school with two classrooms, at one time constructed by the owner of Loma Pytá for the children of his labourers. Two Nivaklé receive a modest state salary for their work as schoolteachers.

A narrow path leads from the village to the "well", a hole dug out to store rainwater. The Indians use the well for drinking, bathing, washing clothes, and at the same time, the well serves as a watering place for the cattle on the ranch. In Loma Pytá are no health facilities such as doctor's visits or a small clinic, although the landlord has always been prepared, in cases of emergency, to take the Indians to the hospital in Filadelfia.

For basic provisions the Nivaklé in Loma Pytá can avail themselves of a small grocery store run by the estate owner. The owner's intention with the shop is not to make a profit from the Indian and Paraguayan labourers of his ranch, but more to keep merchants off the estate. In the past, merchants frequently visited Loma Pytá to sell provisions and above all liquor for high prices.[5]

From the interviews with the Indian households it appears clearly that leadership within the community rests with the *cacique*, a tall, strong man who claims to be the son of Tophay, an important Nivaklé chief who lived a long time ago. The landholder, however, states that his father put the man in charge of the community, not for his pretended background, which he considered incorrect, but for his impressive presence that would enable him influence the others. This clearly reflects the social hierarchy on the ranch; the estate owner decides who is the chief and all members of the community agree, for in fact it is the employer who has full authority.

[5] Information obtained from the landowner in August 1991.

The Nivaklé have taken the first step towards legal recognition of their community. In 1989, six leaders were chosen and presented to the INDI which recognized the leaders as representatives of the group (Resolution 9, 28th of February, 1989). By formalizing leadership, the Nivaklé hoped to improve their difficult situation with respect to the land, but since nothing really changed, two of the six leaders left Loma Pytá in the course of 1990. The Nivaklé made it clear that the four leaders who are still around, have no special authority because of their registration. Leadership rests with the *cacique*, and through him, with the landowner. To the present, the Nivaklé have not applied for the *personería jurídica*, the legal incorporation of the community by the state.

Inquiring after leadership, some Nivaklé mention that the *Paí*, the Priest who visits the community once in a while, holds a strong position in this respect. Although the Father, who is a member of the congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, occupies himself primarily with religious affairs, some Nivaklé assign him a sort of authority in non-religious matters as well. Others show hardly any interest in the Priest, neither in his religious message, nor in his "social visits" nor in his efforts to support the Indians in their struggle for land.

Working for the landowner is the major source of income for the Nivaklé in Loma Pytá. A few women work permanently in the house of the owner's family. They do the cooking, washing and cleaning, and they look after the children and the pets. The men are employed on the ranch but often only for limited periods. For herding cattle they earn wages, while for fencing and clearing land they work on piece rates. Although livestock raising usually employs very little personnel, the large *estancia* Loma Pytá offers daily employment to fifteen men on average. This relatively high number of labourers is the direct result of the typical methods applied on the ranch. Diverting rivers and thoroughly clearing land require intensive labour investment. Besides livestock, the owner has recently started with the cultivation of cotton on a small piece of land. He realized that the Indian community on his land had grown too large to find enough employment on the ranch. "When I can't offer them work", he said during an interview, "they will steal and eat my cows and I can't even blame them for it". Cultivating cotton is not very profitable in this part of the Chaco, it does, however, create work for the Indians.

The Nivaklé have access to arable land to cultivate for their own

consumption. In 1989, the landowner put some three hectares of land at their disposal which he ploughed for them. The first year they worked diligently and cultivated beans, manioc, maize and watermelon on small, individual plots. The harvest was disappointing due to a lack of rain at the right time. In 1990, some of them started again but this time less enthusiasticly. Inquiring after their plans with respect to gardening in 1991 some answered: "I will not work on the field any more for the land is not ours and we will leave as soon as we have land of our own". Others indicated that the field was too small for profitable cultivation. A few Nivaklé were planning to work the land as soon as the rain set in.

Hunting game and gathering wild food are other ways to eke out an existence. As distinct from many other landowners in the region, the owner of Loma Pytá permits the Indians to hunt and gather on his ranch. Unfortunately, however, the ranch is not very suited to hunting and gathering for all bushes and trees have been removed and replaced by pastures. Birds are still plentiful, as they are attracted by swamps in the dry Chaco, but other game is scarce on Loma Pytá as the animals cannot hide. Many Nivaklé told me that they hunted armadillos, *carpinchos*, ant-eaters and even tapirs, not on Loma Pytá, but on neighbouring ranches where there is more bush and forest. They knew that they were not allowed to enter these private lands and that they ran the risk of being shot. With respect to gathering wild food the Nivaklé are confronted with the same problem. On the ranch there is little to gather while neighbouring estates are abundant in wild honey, ostrich eggs, palmhart, etcetera. The Nivaklé frequently live on these lands illegally in order to use these resources. Although the Monte Lindo river is said to be rich in fish, the Indians hardly fish at all.

The Nivaklé village is crowded with domestic animals which also comprise a source of income and food. Countless dogs run around, but unfortunately they are of no use other than a little support during hunts. From the ten households interviewed in August 1991, six had from one to eight horses, five had sheep - between 4 and 28 -, three kept goats - one had 4, another 5 and a third had 10 -, and four had chicken. The horses serve as a mode of transportation for hunting and travelling and the Nivaklé sometimes sell them. Goats, chicken and sheep provide meat, either for sale or for the Indian's consumption; chicken eggs are eaten as well but sheep's wool is hardly used. The Nivaklé estimated that in all they possessed some 200 horses and some 150 sheep. To graze the animals, the landowner permits them to use a fenced-in pasture on his land. Herding cows and pigs is not allowed by the owner.

4.4 Access to land and formal landownership

The interviews among the Nivaklé in Loma Pytá clearly confirm that they aspire to owning a piece of land instead of merely inhabiting it. They feel insecure with the present-day situation and explain their poverty by pointing out the fact that they cannot invest in economic activities like gardening and livestock because they live on other people's land. Some indicate that the community has grown over the years and that the Nivaklé can no longer live together in the village due to the lack of food and employment. "We want to obtain sufficient land where all Nivaklé can cultivate land and live together peacefully", as one of them put it. Another motive for the Nivaklé to aspire to landownership is that they seek to escape their dependence upon the landowner. "We want to gain our own income and be free to work when and where we want, either on Loma Pytá or on any other ranch in the neighbourhood".

The way in which the landowner deals with the Indians on his land seems not to be a major source of discontent for them although conflicts do occur from time to time. One answered: "When we will have our own land, it will be much easier to avoid troubles with the *patrón*, not that we won't work for him anymore, we will, but it will be good to live separated from him and his family". Another Nivaklé described their relationship with the owner of Loma Pytá as follows: "The owner is very fond of us and we are used to him as well. When he needs us, we always work for him and when we are in trouble, he always helps us out, we trust each other".

The owner's opinion with respect to the Indian village on his land is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, he profits from the labour offered by the Nivaklé. For low wages he can always avail himself of as many labourers as he needs. From this point of view, it would upset him to see the Indians leave. Added to this is the fact that his father promised the Nivaklé that they would never be expelled from Loma Pytá and that the ranch would always offer them shelter. The present-day owner of Loma Pytá intends to keep the promise his father made to the Indians.

On the other hand, he is clearly aware of the fact that the current situation cannot last forever. The population of the community is increasing and the ranch can no longer offer enough labour to all. "The situation is not extremely urgent", he said during a conversation, "but I think that in a few years time these Indians have to move to another

place where they have better opportunities to meet their daily needs. I can no longer support them on my own".

The interviews also throw light on the Indians' knowledge with respect to the legal background and procedures relevant to their mode of land tenure on the ranch Loma Pytá.

To begin with, all Nivaklé are clearly aware of the fact that the land on which they live is the property of the rancher and his family. They do not claim any right to it although most of them mention that in earlier days the land had belonged to their people.

When asked whether they were acquainted with the Paraguayan indigenist statute, act 904/81, three answered affirmatively while seven said that they had never heard of it or had no idea what it was about. Eight respondents did not understand the meaning of the legal concept *personería jurídica*, and consequently did not know whether or not their community had been granted this legal recognition. From the sample, five Nivaklé were able to explain the significance and importance of land titles and all five knew that their community did not yet possess a title. Only two of them had a notion of how such a land title can be obtained in the Paraguayan context and what actions have to be taken by the community in order to make any progress in this respect. All in all, it can be safely concluded that the Nivaklé are badly informed about act 904/81 and the procedures set out in it.

The desire of the Nivaklé on Loma Pytá to take possession of a piece of land is not recent. In 1979, the community appealed to the Paraguayan *Instituto de Bienestar Rural* (IBR) and in their letter they pointed out their critical economic and spatial situation (IBR Record 13.227/79). The IBR sent an inspection team that indeed described the living conditions for the Indians on the ranch as "desperate". It did not take any action, however, due to the "lack of transferable land in the region concerned" and the request was put away in the archives (DIM, 1988(4), pp. 6-7).

The case was not reopened until 1987, six years after the indigenist statute 904 had been promulgated by the Paraguayan government. The *Equipo Nacional de Misiones* of the Catholic Church (ENM), as legally recognized representative body of the Indians, repeated the appeal to restore part of the former Nivaklé territory to the community on Loma Pytá. In contrast with their appeal in 1979, the Nivaklé and the ENM asked in their request for a specific piece of land that they considered suitable for a new Indian settlement. They had set

heir minds on an area which in earlier days had been the territory of the Nivaklé communities Novôctas and Ôyôchatshi. Some of the Indians hat lived in Loma Pytá in 1987, stated that they descended from one of hese communities and that Sinocor, an important, ancient leader of the Nivaklé, was buried in Novôctas (DIM, 1988(4), pp. 6-7). The request was filed by the IBR as Record 10.536/87.

The land concerned was known as General Duarte, a cattle ranch of 11,000 hectares situated 20 kilometres to the west of Loma Pytá.[6] In 1983, the German owner of General Duarte had died, and the property had passed into the hands of his heirs who resided in Germany. Since the death of the rancher, the estate had not been properly maintained. A neighbour kept an eye on the ranch and meanwhile drove his own cattle there. In 1987, at the time that the Nivaklé showed their interest in the piece of land, General Duarte was offered for sale because none of the heirs had planned to take over the management of the ranch. In their efforts to sell the estate, the owners, who have probably never seen the property of their relative, were supported by two lawyers, one in Paraguay and one in Germany.

A number of ranchers who have their *estancias* near General Duarte immediately opposed the possible transference of the property to the Nivaklé community. They feared that their estates too would be affected by future Indian claims and that the Nivaklé would enter their ranches and steal cattle. Their protest was supported by the *Asociación Rural del Paraguay* (ARP). Some of the ranchers reacted by threatening and even assaulting the Indians and the missionaries and technicians that assisted them.

On the 31th of July 1987, the ENM informed the owners of General Duarte about the Indian's request to take residence on the ranch, and offered 165 million Guaraníes to buy the land for the Nivaklé. On the 12th of October, the ENM received a letter of the owner's lawyer saying that General Duarte was indeed for sale and that its price amounted to 2,624,650 German Marks (At the time the equivalent of some US $1,630,000, or some 512,600,000 Guaraníes).

Although the price was far too high, the ENM did what it could to raise the money. After negotiations with the IBR and the INDI it was concluded that 200 million Guaraníes could be offered for the ranch,

---

[6] By the time the request was put forward by the Nivaklé and the ENM, it was estimated that the community consisted of 110 families. According to the statute 904/81, the demand for 11,000 hectares therefore was justified.

100 million paid by the INDI and 100 million contributed by the Catholic Church through the ENM (El Diario, 6-7-90, p. 18). Again, the ENM made the offer to the proprietors of General Duarte but they immediately turned it down pointing out the fact that they would have no trouble selling the ranch in Germany for the asking price.

Unable to raise more money, the ENM started to investigate the possibility of expropriating the ranch since it was in a state of disuse and not being exploited "rationally". The efforts of the ENM, however, hardly bothered the owners who felt secure that their property would not be confiscated. Legal procedures took a lot of time and the Indians of Loma Pytá gradually lost confidence in their final success. During the interviews in August 1991, nobody believed that they would ever actually go to General Duarte. The ENM has not yet given in, but nevertheless it seems that the case will end in a blind alley.

An alternative solution came forward from a complete different direction. In 1990, the owner of Loma Pytá together with his uncle who runs the neighbouring ranch Laguna Pucú, purchased 3,750 hectares of land on the north side of the estate (see map 4.2, the shaded parts bordering the road from Pozo Colorado to General Díaz). The land had belonged to the ranch El Trebol. With the purchase, an open connection with the main road was obtained so that the cattle of Loma Pytá no longer had to be transported over other people's land, which in the past had been an issue of conflict.

The way in which the purchased land was divided is rather strange because the northern part was allotted to Loma Pytá although the cattle could never be driven to this new part of the ranch. The owner of Loma Pytá, however, gave an logical explanation for the division. He wants to propose to the Nivaklé that they settle on this land which is well over 900 hectares. He considers the land very suitable for the Indians since it has three lagoons and a wealth of forest. More importantly, it is located next to the main road which will enable the Indians to easily go out and work on other ranches in the region. His idea is to organize basic facilities such as houses, water supply and a school, to repair the fences of the plot and to clear part of the land for agriculture. He explicitly stated that he was prepared to hand over the land officially to the Nivaklé community if they asked him to do so. The land would be given away for free.

The suggested solution would be advantageous for the owner of Loma Pytá as well. He would no longer feel responsible for the Nivaklé

since they would be living alongside the road where they could easily look for other employers. At the same time, however, he would not loose contact with the community and would still be able to count upon its co-operation with work on his ranch. Furthermore, he would be keeping his father's promise to the Indians although the village would be removed to another location.

Within a short time of the purchase, the Nivaklé got wind of the landholder's intention and immediately wanted to move to the plot. From the interviews held in 1991, it clearly appeared that all Nivaklé had heard rumours about the piece of land along the road and that they pictured this land as their future settlement. Nobody considered the area too small although some of them were aware of the fact that, according to the law, they were entitled to much more. The Indian leader of the village said that he intended to ask the owner of Loma Pytá for the title of the plot.

The landowner, however, was in no hurry to permit and arrange the removal of the Indians, especially since the Fathers of the ENM had let him know of their disagreement with the removal. The *Equipo Nacional de Misiones* gave two arguments in defence of its opposition to the offered solution which, at first sight, seems so ideal.

Firstly, the piece of land concerned has no fishing water, has not enough forest for hunting and gathering and is not suited for agriculture. Therefore, it would never enable the Nivaklé to break away from their dependence on paid labour. Additionally, the Fathers feared that as a consequence of the location close to the public road, alcoholism and prostitution among the Indians would increase.

The second argument was of a more political character. Handing over some 900 hectares of land to over eighty Indian families is in defiance of the indigenist statute 904/81 which dictates the transference of at least 100 hectares per family (art.18). If the Nivaklé should accept the offer, the government would be released from its obligation to provide sufficient land in accordance with the law. A future request of the Nivaklé for extension of their land would probably meet no response at all. Besides, the ENM assists many Indian communities in the Paraguayan Chaco. If it should accept the non-observance of act 904/81 in this case, a precedent would be set for the Paraguayan indigenist institution. Future claims for a hundred hectares per family by other Indian communities would be seriously obstructed.

With the foregoing events, we have come to the situation as it was in August 1991. The Nivaklé wanted to settle on the land alongside the road and were waiting for the landowner to give the signal. The owner in his turn was awaiting further steps of the IBR, the INDI and the ENM for he did not want to act without the approval of these institutions. The ENM was still trying to obtain the ranch General Duarte while the INDI and the IBR stood aloof and waited for the problem to be solved by others.

4.5 Conclusion

In the Paraguayan and Argentinean Chaco there are Indian communities residing on privately owned land. These Indians find themselves in an extremely insecure position as they depend completely on the owners of the land they occupy, who can tolerate, exploit or expel them completely at their own discretion.

Current legislation in both Paraguay and Argentina offers the possibility of expropriating the land on which the Indians are settled. Expropriation, however, seems to be a politically delicate measure, applied only under very specific conditions. The fact that the landowners whose land is confiscated in favour of Indian communities have a right to claim compensation raises a budgetary problem for the institutions charged with enacting the indigenist statutes. Besides, many landholders refuse to run the risk of their land being expropriated and as a precaution no longer permit Indians to live on their land. In this manner the new legislation, meant to strengthen the Indian's position with regard to land tenure, sometimes results in the opposite.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Indian community on Loma Pytá had been struggling for land for more than twelve years, in August 1991, the Nivaklé still had no place of their own. Despite the promulgation of the Paraguayan indigenist act in 1981, the Indians had not been able to improve their security of tenure.

Furthermore, it seems that the way in which negotiations with landholders have been conducted over the past few years, for instance by the Catholic Church and the Nivaklé themselves, had not improved the atmosphere for solving the problems of these Indians. At the time of this fieldwork, landholders in the region anxiously refused to cede parts of their land to the Nivaklé because they feared that more land would be

claimed by the Indians as soon as the size of the community had increased. They also accused the Indians of stealing cattle and therefore did not want them to settle in their vicinity.

Besides these obstacles, it appeared that the Nivaklé had little familiarity with the indigenist legislation. They had no idea of how to claim their rights resulting from the act and were unable to decide what steps had to be taken in order to strengthen their legal position. As a consequence, they fully depended on outsiders to resolve the situation in which they found themselves. The outsiders who did want to support the Nivaklé of Loma Pytá, the landowner, the Catholic Church and to a certain extent, the Paraguayan government, had such varying opinions and interests, that a consensus between them was still out of the question.

5. INDIAN COMMUNITIES ON PUBLIC PROPERTY: THE WICHÍ OF PLUMA DE PATO

5.1 Introduction

Since the end of the last century, large areas in the Gran Chaco have been purchased by private entrepreneurs. Not all the land, however, was sold to private landholders. Those parts which are still in the hands of the state or the provincial authorities are often referred to as *tierras fiscales* or public property.

As a result of the advancing colonization frontier in the Gran Chaco, mainly induced by the expansion of livestock production, lots of Indian communities were expelled from their homelands and took refuge on this leftover state territory.[1] The settlement of Indian communities in public territory is secured as long as the governments does not offer the property for sale, or try to implement development projects in these areas. With the current trend of privatization of state property, Indian communities on these lands are increasingly confronted with the sale of the land they occupy.

One of the Indian communities in the Gran Chaco that still resides on public land is the Wichí community in Pluma de Pato in the Argentine province of Salta. For decades, these Wichí have lived tranquilly on the land, not bothered by provincial authorities or private landholders in the region. It seems, however, that at short notice things may change drastically for the Wichí. As far as the provincial government of Salta is concerned, the land of the Indians in Pluma de Pato is to be used for other purposes. A large scale colonization programme is ready to be implemented in the coming years. Nobody seems to have thought about what is to happen with the Indians.

[1] In this chapter, Indian communities residing on public property which has been reserved for them by decree or law, are left out of consideration. In chapter six, these communities are dealt with in detail.

5.2 Indian communities on public property

In the past, Indian communities never officially laid claim to the lands which they used or occupied. Indian traditional law prescribed that a group of hunters or farmers could control a territory, but only for as long as they actually used the land or the resources available in that particular area. Individual possession of land of a more or less permanent character, does not exist in Indian tradition.

The Spanish conquerors of Latin America looked upon landownership in a complete different manner. They killed, expelled or captured the indigenous inhabitants and considered the conquered areas property of the Spanish Crown. Some areas, which offered favourable conditions for agricultural colonization or which provided exploitable resources, were almost immediately brought into production. In other, less valuable and sparsely populated regions, the legal incorporation by the state did not produce any notable changes. For a long time, landownership by the Spanish Crown, and later by the Argentine and Paraguayan states, remained a matter of convention which was not formally registered.

In Paraguay this changed in September 1825 when President José Rodríguez de Francia demanded that every landholder gave legal proof of their landownership within three months. Those landowners that were unable to prove their proprietary right, would loose the land to the state. As a result of the decree, more than half of Eastern Paraguay as well as the entire Chaco fell to the state (Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 75).

In Argentina, a similar event took place in January 1871, when the Argentine act 340/1869 took effect. In article 2.342 of the statute it was declared that all territory within Argentine borders without any registered private owner was considered property of the state (Toledo, 1972, p. 1). On a later occasion, with the provincial redivision, the largest part of the state property passed into the hands of provincial authorities.

Over the years, the area of public property in Argentina and Paraguay decreased. Argentina started issuing land to groups of immigrants who wanted to establish agrarian colonies, and granted parcels to members of the military who had proven their loyalty to the nation. Some areas were allotted to Indian communities and to Churches that wanted to set up missions (Toledo, 1972, p. 2).

Paraguay lost a large part of its public property in the Chaco during the war against the Triple Alliance in which Argentina took

possession of the land between the Bermejo and the Pilcomayo river, an area of some seven million hectares. Thanks to the intervention of president Rutherford Hayes of the United States, Paraguay was able to keep the also disputed area between the Pilcomayo and the Río Verde. The Paraguayan government thereupon tried to overcome the economic depression of the country as a result of the war by selling public property. By the 1920s, it had indeed managed to sell almost the entire Chaco region, mainly to foreign investors. The war with Bolivia (1932-1935) resulted in a considerable expansion of Paraguayan territory in the Chaco and public property increased by some eight million hectares (Kleinpenning, 1987, pp. 75 and 102). Since 1935, vast areas of public land were sold again, usually at very low prices.

The current economic depression in Argentina and Paraguay has induced an intensification of the efforts to sell state property. Numerous state enterprises have been sold over the past few years in order to obtain foreign currency and to replenish the treasury coffers.

In 1990, the *Ley de Emergencia Económica* was passed by the Argentinean Parliament. Cuts in public expenditure, tax increases and the sale of state property were adopted as the instruments of economic recovery. In 1991, President Meném dictated national decree 407 in which the immediate sale of all national land was prescribed (Acción, 1991 (248), pp. 10-2). The measure does not directly affect provincial property, although provincial authorities cannot deviate openly from national policy. Most provinces reacted to the decree by enacting provincial statutes with respect to public property.

In Paraguay, the sale of public property is not encouraged by decree or law, but in 1991, the national cement, alcohol and steel industries, as well as the airlines and shipping fleet were offered for sale. Through advertisement in national and foreign newspapers, remaining parts of public property in the Chaco are also offered for sale.

Estimations indicate that the Paraguayan state in 1984 owned some 5,470,000 hectares of land in the Chaco and that the three northern provinces of Argentina, Salta, Chaco and Formosa, in 1975 together held some 9,854,000 hectares of public land of which the largest part was located in Western Salta[2] and the province of Chaco (Consejo Agrario Nacional, 1975; Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 207). Estimations concerning the

[2] In Salta, most public property is not situated in the Chaco region, but in the mountainous, western part of the province.

area of public property tend to be inaccurate because land owned by the state is generally not surveyed and registered.[3]

Toledo (1972, p. 3) properly observed that public land is in fact a residue which, until now, for some reason, nobody wanted to buy. The lack of interest in these areas can be explained by pointing out some characteristics of public property.

First of all, public land is often of a minor quality as far as agricultural exploitation is concerned. In the Gran Chaco, a lack of fresh water is common in these areas. In general, the location of public property is also disadvantageous. Either it is extremely difficult to reach due to a lack of access routes, or the land is situated on or near national or provincial borders which may create administrative and legal hassles. More often than not, public property is not registered, surveyed and marked off. As a consequence, potential buyers of public land are often unacquainted with the condition of the land. Besides, purchasing the land would entail high investment in order to arrange the legal incorporation of the plot into land registration.

Next to all this, the interest of private investors in the purchase of state land usually diminishes strongly as soon as becomes clear that the area concerned is not uninhabited. Indians as well as non-Indians sometimes squat on these residuary territories, although they are not entitled to do so. The purchase of the land might cause conflicts with the inhabitants in case they do not want to leave the property (de la Cruz, 1989a, p. 10).

Government policy with respect to the restoration of land to Indian communities in the Gran Chaco is laid down in provincial and national legislation. The statutes relating to this matter, discussed in the third chapter of this book, show a certain ambiguity when it comes to Indian occupancy on public property.

On the one hand, the indigenist land acts of Paraguay and Argentina without exception indicate that Indian communities settled on national, provincial or municipal property, occupy these lands illegally.

On the other hand, it appears clearly from the statutes that it is precisely the public property which is eligible for transference to the indigenous population. The statutes of Paraguay, Salta and the national

[3] Unfortunately, more recent data with respect to the area of public property in the Gran Chaco is not available.

act of Argentina do allow for private land to be expropriated in favour of Indian communities, but the allotment of public property is preferred. The statutes of Formosa and Chaco even exclusively appoint public territories as transferable.

It is not surprising that primarily public land is available for the Indians. The provincial and national indigenist institutions, charged with the task of handing over land to the Indian communities, can dispose of the public territory freely for the land is already in the hands of the government.

Given the fact that handing over state territory to Indians living on these lands is a relatively easy procedure for the government, it might be expected that all these communities would have obtained ownership rights by now. This, however, is not the case. In both Argentina and Paraguay, there are many Indian groups living on the outskirts of towns on municipal property, on public lots in the interior, or on the narrow strips of national property alongside the main routes in the region. The tardy course of progress in this respect, can be explained by three reasons.

Firstly, a considerable number of communities have not officially applied for the land because they are unaware of the fact that their land is public property. Other groups intentionally fail to apply for the land out of fear that their request will be turned down by the government. Some communities are currently working on the procedures to obtain their legal recognition by the province or the state, and after that will apply for transference of the property title.

Secondly, public lands are often inhabited by different groups of Indian and non-Indian people. Handing over the land to the actual inhabitants would imply that either a division of the available land between these groups would have to be made, or that some inhabitants would have to be expelled and settled in other areas. The process of dividing the public property among the inhabitants often gives rise to conflicts, and leaving the tenure situation as it is, may occasionally be preferable.

Last but not least, the government is not always willing to cede its land to the Indians. The land indeed is already the property of the state so that purchasing costs can be saved, but transferring land to Indian communities does entail a great deal of expense. Surveying and marking out the land as well as notary costs, weigh heavily upon the budgets of indigenist institutions. The government also assumes that the Indians, once owners of the land, will not exploit the property "rationally". As a

result, the production of the region will not substantially increase and tax income from the land will remain limited. The government therefore often prefers to destine the land for other applications, like colonization programmes and experimental farms and ranches.

In the following sections, I leave the general and discuss public land in Salta specifically. The Wichí of Pluma de Pato serve as an example of those Indian communities in the Gran Chaco currently living on public property.

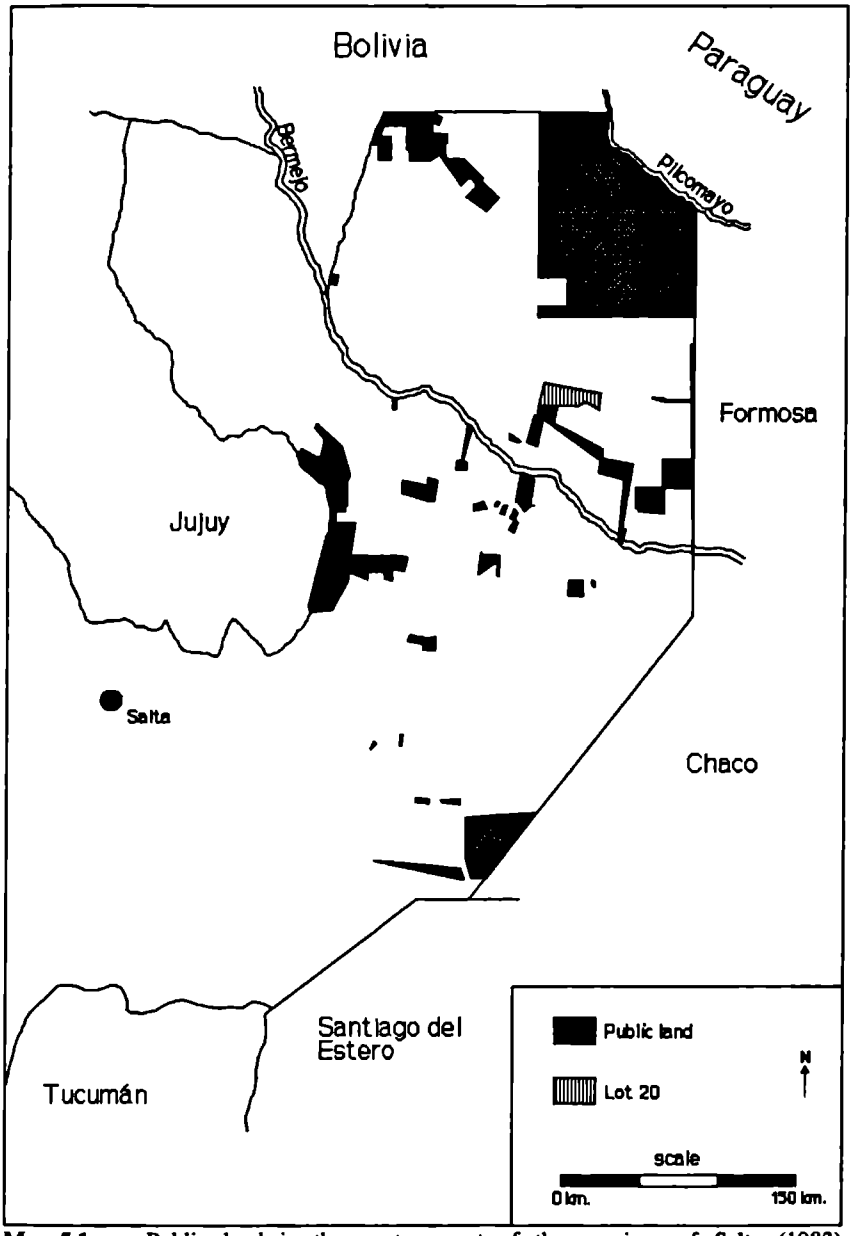
5.3 The Wichí in Pluma de Pato

De la Cruz (1989a, p. 10) points out that currently 29 Indian communities in the province of Salta reside on public property. The total population of these communities amounts to approximately 3,380 people who are mainly of the Wichí tribe. One of these Wichí communities is Pluma de Pato, situated, like many other villages in the region, on the fringe of the railway which leads from Embarcación to Formosa. The land occupied by these Wichí is provincial property and is registered as *lote veinte*; "lot twenty". Map 5.1 indicates public property in the eastern part of the province of Salta.

The Wichí Indians live mainly in the western part of the Argentinean Chaco, between the rivers Bermejo and Pilcomayo. Some groups dwell south of the Bermejo and a handful live north of the Pilcomayo in Paraguayan territory. In former days, before whites settled in the region, the Wichí inhabited large parts of the present-day Paraguayan and Bolivian Chaco as well, but the expansion of agriculture, and the Chaco war (1932-1935) reduced the Wichí's territory. Nowadays, the largest proportion of the Wichí population is located in Eastern Salta and Western Formosa (Palmer, 1977, p. 13).

In literature, the Wichí are often referred to as "Mataco", the name of the linguistic family to which they, together with the Nivaklé, Macá and Chorote, indeed belong. The word "Mataco", however, is a nickname given to these people by the Spaniards and which in old Spanish means "animals of little importance". The indigenous word used by the Indians to refer to themselves is "Wichí", meaning "People" (Magrassi, 1989, p. 80).

The total number of Wichí in Argentina was recorded in the



Map 5.1 Public land in the western part of the province of Salta (1983) (Dirección de inmuebles, 1983)

Censo Nacional de Aborígenes held in 1968 as 10,022 (Bartolomé, 1972, p. 430). Various authors estimate double the number to be more realistic (Barúa, 1986, p. 75; Magrassi, 1989, p. 80; Pelleschi and Pelleschi, 1990, p. 13). Saizar (1989, p. 33) recorded the total Wichí population at about 78,000 and the ENDEPA (1987, p. 9) at 60,000, figures which seem to be overestimated.

Over the years, Wichí culture and tradition have undergone some drastic changes which some authors define in terms of acculturation or cultural disintegration (e.g. Barúa, 1986; Hoek, 1990; Metraux, 1946; Palmer, 1977; Puparelli, 1969). Roughly speaking, three influences have exerted a predominant impact on Wichí culture and tradition.

Firstly, nearly all Wichí have been, or still are, in contact with religious missions mainly of Anglican origin and character. The Anglican Church started working in Salta among the Wichí in 1914. Since then, the Church has played a crucial role in the christianization, education and emancipation of the Wichí (see e.g. Arancibia, 1968, pp. 29-30). Secondly, the settlement of large numbers of *Mestizo* colonists in Wichí territory resulted in frequent contacts and often in conflicts. The colonists took possession of the land and engaged the Wichí as lumbermen or drovers. Finally, Wichí culture was strongly influenced by the labour relations that were established between Indians and whites in the sugar industries in Salta and Jujuy. Until the 1940s, thousands of Indians went to work every year on the plantations.

By now, notwithstanding the fact that a lot of Wichí have become Christians, the missionary influence of the Church has decreased. Next to this, land conflicts have more or less stabilized and in fact left most communities without land, and Indian employment with the sugarmills has come to and end. Nowadays, most Wichí depend on marginal and incidental jobs and live on the outskirts of towns where they lack property rights.

Pluma de Pato, "duck's feather", is a small village in Salta with some 240 inhabitants. Four kilometres from the village, in the direction of Morillo, is a Wichí settlement known under the same name. In the past, the Wichí lived on private property practically in the village itself, but they were evicted from there in 1987. Nowadays, the Wichí still call their community Pluma de Pato.

Pluma de Pato is located in the department of Rivadavia, on the Tropic of Capricorn and 63 degrees east. Rivadavia is a sparsely populated department with few villages of significant size. The economy

is dominated by large estate holders who specialize in livestock farming. Extreme drought causes the rivers in the region to dry from July to November and seriously hinders crop farming.

Pluma de Pato originates, together with neighbouring villages like Hickman, Dragones, Morillo and Los Blancos from the beginning of this century when the railway from Formosa to Embarcación was constructed (Cadena de Hessling, 1985, p. 166). The labourers that worked in the construction, Indians as well as non-Indians, settled down alongside the railway and stayed there to the present. The railroad also led to a drastic increase in deforestation of the region (Bardomas, 1990, p. 6).

In 1965, the national route 81, running parallel with the railway, was opened. The construction of route 81 resulted in a growth of population and economic activity in the region. The condition of the road, however, is extremely bad, especially during periods of heavy rainfall, for to the present, the road is only sealed as far as Dragones from the west and to Estanislao del Campo from the east. Work on sealing the road still continues, but at slow pace.

The Wichí of Pluma de Pato live some 500 metres north of route 81. The village is completely hidden for it is surrounded by bushes and forest. Approximately 40 houses, built in a somewhat traditional style from branches and mud, stand dispersed and narrow footpaths lead through the wood.

According to the last census, held in 1990, the village housed 178 people belonging to 37 households. In 1983, official figures had recorded a total of 122 inhabitants, which confirms the impression that the Wichí population of Pluma de Pato is increasing (Ministerio de Bienestar Social, 1984, p. 116). The census of 1990 indicated that the great majority of the inhabitants were born in Pluma de Pato itself. Some 30 Wichí gave other birthplaces but most of them within a range of 100 kilometres.

For schooling, the Indians depend on facilities in the Creole town four kilometres distant. During a visit in November 1991, however, most of the Wichí in Pluma de Pato indicated that they do not send their children to school in town. This in spite of the fact that one of the schoolteachers is Wichí and lives in their community. The man is a bilingual teacher who gives lessons in both Spanish and Wichí. The provincial census of 1983 recorded that from the total Indian population of Pluma de Pato, 19 went to school, while only 11 had been to school in the past (Ministerio de Bienestar Social, 1984, p. 165). In November

1991, the Wichí also depended on the neighbouring town for drinking-water. The wind-driven pump in the Indian village had broken down some months before. Carrying heavy jerrycans, the Wichí women walked into town several times a week, in order to ask for drinking-water. Health care for the Wichí is provided by a pastoral team of the Catholic Diocese of Orán. The team is stationed in Morillo, 24 kilometres from the Indian settlement Pluma de Pato, and provides services for almost all Indian communities in the region.

In contrast with many other Indian communities in the Gran Chaco, the Wichí of Pluma de Pato enjoy self-government. Contacts with the outside world are merely confined to incidental labour relations and trading contacts. Apart from this, members of the pastoral team from Morillo visit the community now and then, but there is no question of intensive contact, not of co-operation nor of domination of the Wichí by the Catholic Church. In the past, two Protestant Churches, the *Asambleos de Dios* and the *Junta Unida de Misiones*, regularly visited the community. These visits, however, seem to have come to an end although the Wichí have no explanation for the sudden break of contact. In fact, some Wichí feel abandoned by these Churches.[4]

Contacts on a provincial level are even more sporadic. The policy of provincial authorities does not interfere with the economic or social position of the community, and the IPA, *Instituto Provincial de Aborígines*, is hardly known by the Wichí in Pluma de Pato. The few Indians who were informed about the work of the IPA, claim that the organization is dominated by Chané Indians for whom Wichí interests always come second. The IPA was in no way considered their representative and nobody expected any help or solidarity from the institution.

Leadership within the community is not clearly defined. Inquiring after leaders, six out of ten indeed appointed the man who has been registered as the head of the group since 1987. One respondent, however, was convinced that the former leader was still in charge, while three others claimed that actually the president of the *Comisión Vecinal*, the "neighbourhood commission", was the leader of the community. The commission was founded some years ago with the goal of obtaining legal recognition of the community by the provincial authorities of Salta.

[4] Information obtained in November 1991 when ten Wichí households were interviewed on different subjects.

Although the intended result failed to arise, the chosen president, who in fact is also the bilingual teacher who works on the school in town, managed to take an important position within the community. Nobody gave evidence that the absence of a unanimously appointed leader caused any political or social tension within the group.

The economy of the Wichí in Pluma de Pato is highly diversified. On the one hand, they have come to depend on commercially oriented activities, on the other hand, however, they continue production for their own consumption.

Felling *quebracho* trees and selling the wood as fence posts, is the most important source of income for the Wichí. Provincial legislation explicitly grants the Indian population the right to exploit forest resources on public territory. The Wichí of Pluma de Pato mainly fell trees on the public property which they occupy, although once in a while they work on other public land as well. Cutting down trees is only possible during the dry months of the year. Therefore, the men of Pluma de Pato normally work almost full time as lumbermen from April to October.

The posts range in size from 2,2 to 3 metres. In general, only one post can be made out of a fully grown *quebracho* tree. An average lumberjack can cut down three trees a day and one post fetches a price of approximately US $2.5, depending on thickness, length and shape. Local merchants purchase the posts which they resell in Tartagal or Salta at higher prices. Usually, they charge the Indians considerable fees for transport which depresses the Wichí's income.

The municipality of Morillo registers all trade in *quebracho* posts in the region. According to this registration, during the months July, August and September of 1991, the Wichí of Pluma de Pato offered 5905 posts for sale. Taking into account the average price of the posts, these 5905 pieces represented an income of almost US $15,000, to be divided among an estimated 25 families. The total income might be somewhat overestimated. Firstly, the costs of transport have to be subtracted from the earnings, and secondly, it sometimes happens that the Indians sell posts which in fact belong to *Criollos* who illegally lumbered *quebracho* trees on public property. The Wichí usually ask the merchants for payment in advance which leaves them in debt. The final

account at the end of the season often disappoints them.[5]

The Wichí of Pluma de Pato also earn income by selling charcoal. They prepare the charcoal themselves by employing the so-called *estilo santiagueño*, the mode of production applied in the province of Santiago del Estero; collecting dry sticks in the woods and burning them slowly for two days in a covered hole in the ground. Packed in bags of fifteen to twenty kg., the charcoal is sold in Morillo or Pluma de Pato at an average price of US $1 a bag. Transport and commercialization problems hinder the expansion of charcoal production. In November 1991, seven out of ten interviewed households claimed to have earnings from the sale of charcoal.

Nearly all indigenous communities in the region have their own type of handicraft. The Wichí of Pluma de Pato make beautiful woodcarvings of bird figures and woven baskets of cotton and straw. The making of handiwork is both men's and women's work. The men produce carvings of *palo santo* wood while the women are responsible for weaving. Although the Wichí of Pluma de Pato made it clear that they enjoy handicraft, production in fact is limited. Commercialization again is the bottleneck, for the market in neighbouring towns is extremely poor and carrying the products to other, larger cities in the region, is too expensive. Once a year, Wichí artisans from the department of Rivadavia meet in Misión Esperanza. During these meetings, the artisans exchange experiences with respect to their work. By organizing themselves, they hope to improve the quality and the sale of their products. Some groups, like for instance the Wichí of Los Blancos, seem to be successful in the promotion of their handiwork. (Acción, 1988 (210), pp. 5-7; Acción, 1989 (222), pp. 6-7). Others, like the Indians in Pluma de Pato, have not managed to find a satisfactory outlet for their products. As a consequence, the income earned by these groups through the sale of handiwork is only marginal.

Paid labour is another way to acquire an income. Casual jobs, named as *changas*, are sometimes offered by livestock farmers, timber companies or municipalities. In all, however, supply of employment in the region is limited and falls short of demand. Many Wichí of Pluma de Pato mentioned the lack of employment as one of their most acute problems.

Traditional economic activities of the Wichí are still undertaken

[5] Information obtained from an interview with one of the employees of the municipality of Morillo in November 1991.

by the inhabitants of Pluma de Pato and guarantee a small but reliable income.

Firstly, all families keep animals around the house. The ten households interviewed in November 1991, together kept 78 goats, 9 sheep and 91 chickens. The animals were more or less equally spread over the families. It appeared that nobody in the community possessed horses or cows. The Wichí take great pains to confine the livestock in order to keep it from eating the crops in their gardens. By piling up branches, they try to create provisional pens, but unfortunately the animals frequently break out. Animals primarily serve to meet community needs, only in case of surplus, will the Wichí try to sell some.

The Indians supplement their diet by small-scale agriculture. North of the village is a field of some 20 hectares which at the time of the Wichí's settlement on the public property, was cleared by the municipality of Pluma de Pato to allow farming. The field is parcelled into several family plots with an average size of one hectare on which mainly crops like maize, gourds and melon are cultivated. Talking about gardening, the Wichí often complained about the lack of water as a result of the faulty pump, and about their troubles with keeping the animals from eating the crops. Two respondents said they had already started farming on "Lot 21", another piece of public land in the vicinity of Pluma de Pato, because there, they were not hindered by animals.

Hunting game plays a significant role in the economy of the Wichí. Rabbits, deer, iguanas and wild pigs are common fauna in this part of the Chaco, and the Wichí have always hunted these animals. Hunting takes place mainly on the public land itself, although many Wichí complain that currently the stock of game in this area is decreasing rapidly. Deforestation, human exploitation of vital water supplies and the increase of livestock drive the wildlife to other, more quiet areas. The Wichí say that nowadays they go as far as 15 to 20 kilometres in order to find game. Since Pluma de Pato is located at a distance of some 40 kilometres from the nearest river, fishing is of very little economic importance.

The gathering of wild food represents another supplement to the diet of the Wichí. In the near vicinity of the village, wild honey, bird's eggs and all kinds of roots and fruits like *chañar*, *mistol* and forest beans are on hand. Especially the beans of the *algarroba* tree are in demand with the Indians as the beans seem to have a pleasant taste and moreover a high nutritional value. From November to January, the

algarroba tree bears fruit and the Wichí often harvest them. Unfortunately, however, the *Criollos* in the area often cut down the *algarroba* to create pasture land for their cattle or for exploiting the timber.

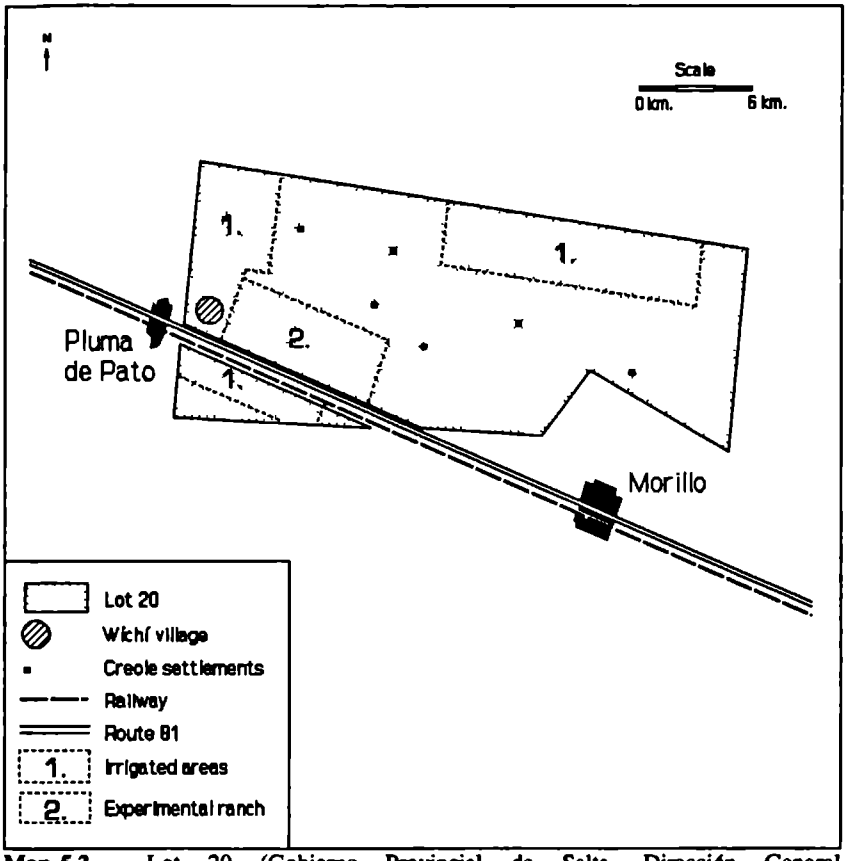
5.4 Access to landownership and development projects

Public Lot 20 covers an area of 48,777 hectares (Consejo Agrario Nacional, 1975). The land is the property of the provincial government of Salta. The Wichí of Pluma de Pato have their village and arable fields on the west side of the lot. For hunting, gathering wild food, lumbering *quebracho* trees and collecting dry sticks, however, the immediate vicinity of the village cannot supply the whole community. To meet the economic needs of the group, the Wichí have to exploit natural resources in other parts of the region as well. Usually, they stick to Lot 20, although sometimes, especially in periods of drought, they enter private property and other public land.

The Wichí are not the only inhabitants of the lot. Dispersed in the woods are at least six *puestos Criollos*; small, primitive ranches where a *Criollo* family and some labourers live in isolation. These *Criollo* ranchers usually have some 50 to 150 head of cattle each, which is just about enough to survive. The cattle are not penned in, but roam the bush freely, marked with a brand. Often, the ranches of the *Criollos* make great demands on land. La Esperanza for instance, one of the ranches on Lot 20, appropriates no less than 5,000 hectares. In general, living conditions on the ranches are very poor and in many ways similar to the situation in the Indian village. Like the Wichí, the *Criollo* settlers lack official titles and consequently are considered illegal squatters on public property. Most of the *Criollo* ranchers have been living on this land for several generations.[6]

Besides the *Criollo* settlers on Lot 20 and the Wichí of Pluma de Pato, three more Wichí communities economically depend on the public property. The three communities concerned do not actually live on the public land, but all the same depend on it for hunting, gathering and lumbering. Currently, they live on the outskirts of Morillo on a tiny piece of municipal property where they do not have the opportunity to

[6] The study by Bardomas (1990, p. 39) indicates that 73% of the *Criollo* settlers on public property in the region has lived in the area for more than 20 years.



Map 5.2 Lot 20 (Gobierno Provincial de Salta, Dirección General Agropecuaria, Departamento de Suelo, Riego y Clima, 1988)

gain sufficient income. Access to Lot 20 seems to be of crucial importance for these Indians too.

The government's intentions with respect to the public property in Salta is apparent from provincial legislation.

In 1980, act 5.713, *Ley de Colonización y Tierras Fiscales de la Provincia de Salta*, was promulgated. The main objective of this law was to give priority to the economic development of the region over the interests of the Indian and non-Indian inhabitants of public land. All inhabitants of state property without legal permission were considered

ıtruders and could be expelled by the authorities if colonization rogrammes should require such measures. Next to this, it was decided ıat in those public areas where no development projects were to be tarted, the land should be offered for sale (art. 63).

In March 1990, a new statute of colonization and public land was assed by the parliament. The objective of act 6.570 is to realize a eorganization of the use of public land based on three elements: a rational" exploitation of land, access of inhabitants to landownership, nd settlement of colonists in uninhabited areas (art. 1). Furthermore, the ct explicitly forbids the sale of occupied public property and instead ets these areas aside for the construction of infrastructure and xperimental stations, for the preservation of nature, and for activities roposed by the inhabitants themselves (art. 12).

For the Indian population of Salta, statute 6.570 is of great value or it enables them to apply for the titles of the land they occupy. The ight to do so is not recent, but was already laid down in 1986 when the ndigenist act 6.373, *Ley de Promoción y Desarrollo del Aborigen* was romulgated. In contrast with act 6.373, however, act 6.570 gives a full escription of the legal steps that have to be taken in order to obtain egal ownership.

ot 20 and many other public lands in the department of Rivadavia are nhabited by both Wichí and *Criollos*. In case where these public roperties were to be handed over to the people who now live on them, hey would have to be divided between the Indians and the *Criollos*. his, however, is a very complicated matter. It seems therefore as if the overnment of Salta has chosen not to interfere in such a delicate natter. In virtually all cases of multiethnic occupancy, the authorities ecided not to cede the land but instead keep it as provincial property.

In some cases, Indians and *Criollos* have managed to divide the ublic land themselves. Often with the help of impartial third parties, nformal agreements on subdivision of the property have been effected. he agreements indeed do not have legal value for the land is still the roperty of the province, but at least for the time being, conflicts over he land between the *Criollo* settlers and the Indians have been solved. n the course of time, these covenants might be converted into legal wnership for all inhabitants.

It seems that in Lot 20 such an agreement between the Wichí and he *Criollos* is out of the question. Contacts between the two ethnic roups are no more than sporadic and have not reached the stage of

negotiation. Besides, there is no organization actively involved in the well-being of the inhabitants of Lot 20 that would be able to conduct such negotiations.

Of greater importance, however, is the fact that the government of Salta will probably never hand over the land to the inhabitants. In co-operation with Italian funds, the provincial authorities have started the development project *La Quena - Morillo* which will affect a large part of Lot 20.

Preparations for the *Proyecto de Desarrollo Agro-Zootécnico del Area La Quena - Morillo*, as it is fully named, started in 1986. The main objective of the project is to cut a canal from La Quena, which is located alongside the Bermejo river near Embarcación in the western part of the Chaco, and Morillo, in order to supply the dry regions with sufficient water to allow agriculture. Especially public lands are supposed to profit from the canal.

According to the plan, Lot 20 will be the centre of the project. In 1991, a team of technicians started the construction of a *campo demostrador*, an experimental station for research into livestock production. An area of 3,000 hectares has been fenced in and indicates the future location of the station (see map 5.2). All necessary technical equipment has already been procured and put into storage in Salta, awaiting transport to Lot 20. The experimental station will focus on the breeding of small livestock like goats, chicken, sheep and pigs, and will benefit small producers in the region. Although the construction of the station is somewhat behind schedule, the director of the plan is convinced that it will finally be a success.[7]

Next to the experimental station, *La Quena - Morillo* involves the irrigation of two areas of 5,000 hectares each, also located on Lot 20 (Berisso, 1991, p. 1). The irrigated land will be used for agricultural purposes. Given the fact that operations related to the construction of the canal have not actually started yet, the irrigated areas will not be operative on short term. Nevertheless, they will eventually cover a significant proportion of Lot 20.

Four agricultural experts will be recruited to coordinate the ranch and the cultivation and marketing of crops. Next to these experts, a limited number of labourers from the region itself will be employed in the project as well. Whether the Wichí will be considered for jobs within the project, was still uncertain in November 1991.

---

[7] Information obtained from the director of the project La Quena - Morillo.

Looking at map 5.2, it appears that the locations of the experimental station and the irrigated areas do not interfere with the six *Criollo* settlements on Lot 20. The Wichí village, however, lies fully within one of the irrigated areas and it may safely be assumed that in time, the Indians have to leave their current location. An employee of the municipality of Morillo, who was involved in *La Quena - Morillo*, expressed himself clearly when he said: "The project primarily intends to support the *Criollo* families in the region who already have cattle and fields. The Indians cannot participate in the project, except maybe during the initial phase in the construction of roads and fences. I think that, eventually, these people will have to look for a new place to live. As a matter of fact, these Wichí are not even interested in agriculture and livestock breeding".

Of course, all Wichí of Pluma de Pato have noticed the current activity on Lot 20. They have seen the signs of the project, *La Quena - Morillo*, alongside the road and the fences that have been put up. From the interviews held in November 1991 among ten at randomly chosen households it appears that most Wichí do not consider the project a problem, although at the same time, nobody knows exactly what is actually going on. One of them said: "Well, they are up to something, constructing something, but I don't know what it is. What I do know is that we are no longer allowed to enter the area that has been fenced in". Another said, pointing at the future location of the experimental station: "I overheard that there is going to be a school over there, so perhaps our children can take classes too". The Wichí are not aware of the fact that *La Quena - Morillo* also includes two large, irrigated fields.

The Indians of Pluma de Pato have a clear knowledge of the fact that Lot 20 is the property of the province of Salta. Most of them, however, do not feel safe with this situation, and eight respondents explicitly expressed their ambition to obtain legal landownership.

The answers given during the interviews clearly indicate that the Wichí do not know how to apply for landownership. Seven respondents simply said that they had no idea of how they were to act in this matter. One of them said; "I don't know what we have to do, what I do know is that we cannot buy the land for we haven't got a penny". The other three responded that by working hard on their fields, they would eventually be granted landownership. Apparently, these Wichí had overheard parts of the new statute on colonization and public land, in which it is stated that only those occupiers who "rationally" exploit the

public land, are considered for landownership. Inquiring after their acquaintance with the indigenist statute of Salta, six Wichí claimed to have knowledge of the act, but only two were able to explain the content of it. The other four thought that the act was about facilities for the commercialization of Indian products.

The last topic in every interview dealt with the question of how the Indians pictured their future, and whether they thought they could stay at their current location. All ten stated that they would prefer staying where they are now instead of looking for another place to live. Five of them added that they also could think of no reason why they should have to leave their village. The other five were not sure whether the community would be able to remain on Lot 20. One mentioned that conflicts with *Criollo* settlers in the area were likely to get out of hand in the near future. The others held the view that the government was trying to sell the public land to the management of *La Quena - Morillo.* One of them expressed their preoccupation clearly when he said: "They say the government has offered our land for sale, and since we don't have the title, I think the new owner will expel us from here. If this happens, we'll have no place to go to".

5.5 Conclusion

Substantial parts of the Gran Chaco area have not been sold to private landowners, but are still in the hands of national or provincial authorities. For Indians as well as for other underprivileged people who have been deprived of their land, this public territory has become a kind of refuge where, at least for the time being, they can live quietly without being bothered by private landholders. Whether or not these areas are secured for them in the future as well, depends on government policy.

A group of Wichí Indians has settled on public property near Pluma de Pato in the province of Salta. Together with some *Criollo* families, these Indians occupy a piece of land called Lot 20. Both the Wichí and the *Criollos* do not possess any type of permission or legal method of defending their right to occupy the area.

In 1986, the provincial authorities started an ambiguous development project that aims to cut a canal from the Bermejo river to Lot 20. On the property itself, the project involves the construction of an experimental station and two irrigated fields. According to the reports and maps on the project, the village of the Wichí will have to make way

for one of the irrigated fields, whereas the *Criollo* settlements on Lot 20 are neatly kept out of harm's way. The Indians, not properly informed of the future developments relating to their land, do not know what is going on, and lack the knowledge of legal regulations that would enable them to secure their settlement.

I have to conclude that Indian communities living on public property, even if it involves areas of extremely marginal quality, cannot be sure that they will be able to remain there. Despite all of the legal measures set out to support the Indians in their struggle for landownership, the interests of non-Indian settlers and the economic development of the region at large, often come first.

6. INDIAN RESERVATIONS: THE MOCOVÍ AND TOBA OF COLONIA ABORIGEN CHACO

6.1 Introduction

An Indian community that resides on a reservation has been granted the legal right of usufruct of that particular area. Usufruct literally means the right of enjoying the use and advantages of another person's property on condition that one does not harm or waste it. The legal right of usufruct provides the inhabitants of the reservation with some kind of legal instrument to secure them against eviction. In contrast to those Indian communities living on private land or on public property without Indian reservation status, these groups have been given some kind of permission to occupy the land. They do not, however, own the land. Indian reservations in the Gran Chaco remain the property of national or provincial authorities.

In this chapter, I will look at Indian reservations in the Gran Chaco and sketch the history and present-day situation of Colonia Aborigen, formerly known as Napalpí, an Indian reservation in the Argentine province of Chaco. Colonia Aborigen was chosen as a case study because it is the oldest and most famous reservation in the region. Argentine indigenist policy over the years is clearly reflected in the history of this colony. Furthermore, the history of Colonia Aborigen is relatively well documented in the literature which made it easier for me to compose the background of the study. The fact that Colonia Aborigen is located in the province of Chaco was another reason for studying this reservation for, as will become obvious in the following, the status and future of Indian reservations in the province of Chaco is a hot issue at the moment.

Notwithstanding the interesting history of Napalpí or Colonia Aborigen, this chapter focuses mainly on the present-day situation and problems of the approximately 2,500 Toba and Mocoví Indians who now live on the reservation. The most important question raised is whether or not the inhabitants of Colonia Aborigen will be able to defend their right to live on the reservation in the future, and if they have a chance to secure this right by obtaining the title of the land.

Before I come to that, however, I will give a general outline of the legislation concerning Indian reservations and glance at Indian reservations in other parts of the Gran Chaco.

6.2 Indian reservations in the Gran Chaco

Indian communities residing on reservations have been given a kind of provisional title of the land which they occupy. National or provincial authorities acknowledge the presence of Indian people in a certain area and respond to the right of these people to live on a piece of land which they can call their own. The Indians do not, however, become the owners the land, but may use the land for making a livelihood. Governments, the actual owners of the property, retain the power and the right to evict the Indians from the reservation or to accept the tenancy only when specific conditions are fulfilled by the Indians.

In general, Indian people that have obtained usufruct of a specific piece of land must actually live on the land and work it themselves, without the help of hired labour. Additionally, they may not lease the land to people from outside the community nor use it for security on credit. Finally, they may not exploit the available resources without asking permission from the authorities (see e.g. Bertone, 1985, pp. 61-2).

Governments may have various reasons for establishing reservations. Sometimes reservations are a necessary step in the procedure of granting definitive titles to Indian communities. The public property, or private property expropriated for that purpose, is first registered as available for transference to the Indians which obstructs all other applications. The community involved receives a provisional title and a procedure to hand over the property is started. On the completion of the administrative procedure - which may take up to three or four years - the provisional title is replaced by a definitive title.

In other cases, Indian communities are granted with provisional titles because legislation does not provide the possibility of granting definitive titles to groups of people instead of individual persons. Especially in the past, when indigenist legislation was far less advanced in this respect, provisional titles offered the best possible solution.

A third reason why Indian communities are not always given definitive titles of the land they occupy is that the authorities sometimes do not wish to give up these properties. When Indian claims to land

become too loud, the authorities may try to satisfy the Indians with a provisional title which means that they are given usufruct of the land. These provisional titles are not meant to be replaced by definitive titles, but serve to salve feelings of discontent.

The word "reservation" in itself also reflects this ambiguity in the indigenist policy behind the establishment of reservations. On the one hand, the areas are reserved for the Indians, in other words, appointed for the exclusive use of the Indians. On the other hand, the areas and the available resources are reserved, not for the Indians who now live there, but for future exploitation. The government permits the Indian people to live in these areas, but does not give them ownership.

In the context of this study an important question is to what extent the reservations guarantee the Indians the right to occupy their lands in the future.

Since the reservations are not owned by Indian communities, but have remained in the hands of provincial or national authorities as public property, Indian communities living on reservations depend completely on the goodwill of the authorities. In some cases, this does not seem to raise a problem because the authorities either respect the Indian right to occupy these lands, or have no other plans for the land, for instance because it is of poor quality. In other cases, however, reservations are not respected as Indian lands. Especially when resources like timber or oil are present in the reserved areas, governments are often willing to hand out concessions to private companies that want to exploit these resources. The Indian population is either moved to another site that the authorities offer them, or are simply expelled without compensation. Occasionally, authorities have put parts of Indian reservations on sale in an attempt to increase their agricultural production. When some colonist was interested in the property, the Indians had to move on.

Another cause of insecurity is the fact that most Indian reservations are not demarcated and fenced which makes the property boundaries extremely difficult to recognize, and therefore disputable. Neighbouring *estancieros* or farmers sometimes abuse this fact by taking possession of areas near the boundary or by driving cattle into the reservations.

To obtain a better understanding of the security offered by reservations, the legal context in which reservations have come into being needs to be taken into account.

In 1904, the Paraguayan government promulgated *La Ley de*

Colonización y del Hogar which authorized the establishment of Indian *reducciones* on national property (Kleinpenning, 1987, p. 237; Vázquez, 1981, p. 101). Since the struggle for land in the western part of the country had not yet become severe at that time, none of these *reducciones* were started in the Chaco. After the Chaco War (1932-1935), one single Indian reservation was established in the Paraguayan Chaco. An area of 10,000 hectares was transferred to a group of Toba Indians in gratitude for their support to the Paraguayan army during the war against the Bolivian troops (BPD, 1980, p. 7). The Toba did not obtain the title of the land, but were to be protected by the government. In 1969, the owner of the cattle ranch *La Gauloise Campos y Haciendas S.A.*, ignored the protected status of the Indian reservation and threw the Toba off their land which he claimed to be his (Chase-Sardi et al., 1990, p. 177).

Nowadays, there are Indian reservations, referred to as *Colonias Nacionales Indígenas*, in the Paraguayan Chaco. The principles of these *Colonias Nacionales Indígenas* are embedded in *El Estatuto Agrario 854/63* (art. 16) where it is stated that groups of Indians living in these colonies will be assisted by the IBR in organizing themselves. With respect to land tenure, these colonies obtain provisional titles which are supposed to be replaced by definitive titles in the course of time. Presently in the Paraguayan Chaco, a handful of communities live in *Colonias Nacionales Indígenas*. Many more, however, as for instance Puerto Diana, Yi'shinachat and Pedro P. Peña, are former *Colonias Nacionales Indígenas* which have now been awarded to their inhabitants (Chase-Sardi et al., 1990; DIM, 1990 (37), p. 8). It seems that in Paraguay, provisional titles for reservations are granted to Indian communities that indeed may look forward to the definitive transfer of the property, although final execution of the matter may take many years.

In Argentina, reservations came into existence in the first decades of the 20th century. After the military campaigns that subdued the Indian population of the Argentine Chaco, the national authorities felt the need to concentrate the Indians in well-structured settlements which were called *reducciones*. These *reducciones* were started to pacify the often hostile Indians and also to incorporate the Indian people as labourers who were to serve the region's economic development. From then on, sugar plantations and cotton farmers could avail themselves of the large and cheap labour force permanently present in the *reducciones* (Bray, 1989, p. 4; Iñigo Carrera, 1981, p. 242).

The *reducciones* in fact were the first Argentinean reservations. Clearly defined areas were appointed by national decrees as *Reservas Aborígenes*. These reservations were to offer shelter to the Indians and could not be inhabited by non-Indian people. De la Cruz (1989b, p. 20) mentions thirteen *Reservas Aborígenes* that were established in the Argentine Chaco during the first two decades of the 20th century.

In 1951, however, the federal government of Argentina granted the northern provinces of the country full self-government (Altamirano et al, 1987, p. 282; Bray, 1989, p. 10). Since the provinces became more or less autonomous political entities, all national decrees dating from before the provincial division lapsed and the Indian reservations in fact became common provincial properties without prescribed development plans. The continuation of the Indian reservations was only possible if provincial authorities were prepared to renew the decrees (CEC, 1989, p. 20; de la Cruz, 1989b, p. 10).

In Formosa the provincial authorities did not ratify the national decrees and the Indian reservations fell to the province. Despite the remissness of the authorities of Formosa, the *Reservas Aborígenes* that had been reserved for the Indians in the past by national decrees, were not openly violated. Most Indians could continue living in the reservations because few people were interested in the areas that often are of poor quality as far as agricultural exploitation is concerned. Occasionally, Indian communities had to leave the reserved areas because oil was found in or near the reservation. In general, however, the reserved areas were officially public property, but more or less respected by the authorities as Indian territory (CEC, 1989, p. 22). When the indigenist act of Formosa, *Ley Integral del Aborigen*, was promulgated in 1984, the authorities almost immediately handed over the reserved lands to the Indians who at that time lived in these areas. From the total area unofficially handed over to the Indians previously, only a part was left at the time of actual transference. Colonia Bartolomé de las Casas, for instance, at the time of its establishment in 1914 measured no less than 25,757 hectares. In 1984, however, when the land was actually transferred, only 20,647 hectares were left. More so San Francisco de Laishí which in 1914 was recognised as an Indian reservation of 40,000 hectares. In 1984, the area had been reduced to 705 hectares (de la Cruz, 1989b, p. 20; Poder Legislativo Formosa, 1984). Illegal practices of private landowners, often supported by the authorities who turned a blind eye, had left the Indians in Formosa bereft of a large proportion of

their land. The fact that most reservations had never been demarcated and fenced, was extremely convenient for the landowners that wanted to enlarge their property. Nowadays there are no reservations left in Formosa, what remains of the formerly appointed areas has been legally transferred to the Indians.

The government of Salta did ratify the national decrees. In 1971, the legislature of Salta promulgated decree 2.293, *Constitución de Reservas Indígenas Provinciales*, that allowed for certain areas to be regarded as Indian territories. Decree 2.293 was followed by various acts and decrees that settled the establishment of specific Indian reservations. Nowadays, 7,500 hectares of land in seven different locations in the province of Salta, have been reserved for Indian communities (de la Cruz, 1989a, p. 32). Whether the government of Salta intends to hand over these properties to the Indian communities is hard to predict, especially since the legal arrangements to do so have not yet been made. The reservations are relatively safe, however, as all have been surveyed and demarcated.[1]

In 1972, the government of Chaco promulgated *Ley Provincial 970* which gave the *Instituto de Colonización de Tierras Fiscales* permission to hand over public property to Indian communities which would receive provisional titles. The land would be transferred without demarcation (Norte, 21-4-86). In the years that followed, a number of reservations that dated from before the provincial division in 1951 were ratified and a number of public lots were also reserved for the Indians. It was decided that the IDACH would co-ordinate all matters related to the reserved areas.

In 1990, there were about thirty reservations in the province of Chaco with a total area of over 300,000 hectares. Thirteen reservations date from before 1983, the others have since been established (IDACH, 1990). De la Cruz (1989b, p. 12) estimates that in 1989, 44% of all Indian communities in the province of Chaco lived in areas of which

---

[1] An exception among the reservations in Salta, is *Lote Fiscal 55*, an area of 232,000 hectares in the north of the province on the bank of the Pilcomayo river. *Lote 55* in fact is public property, but in the past, when the area was known as Colonia Buenaventura, the land was promised to the Indians. Nowadays the lot is inhabited by both *Criollos* and Indians. The future of the Indians living in *Lote 55* is insecure because the provincial authorities are not willing to hand over the land to them but seek to content both the Indians and the *Criollos*. This, however, seems an arduous task. It would carry too far to discuss this here at length (see CEC, 1989, p. 25; DIM, 1987(27), p. 22; Machuca, 1986, pp. 10-3).

hey had provisional property titles.

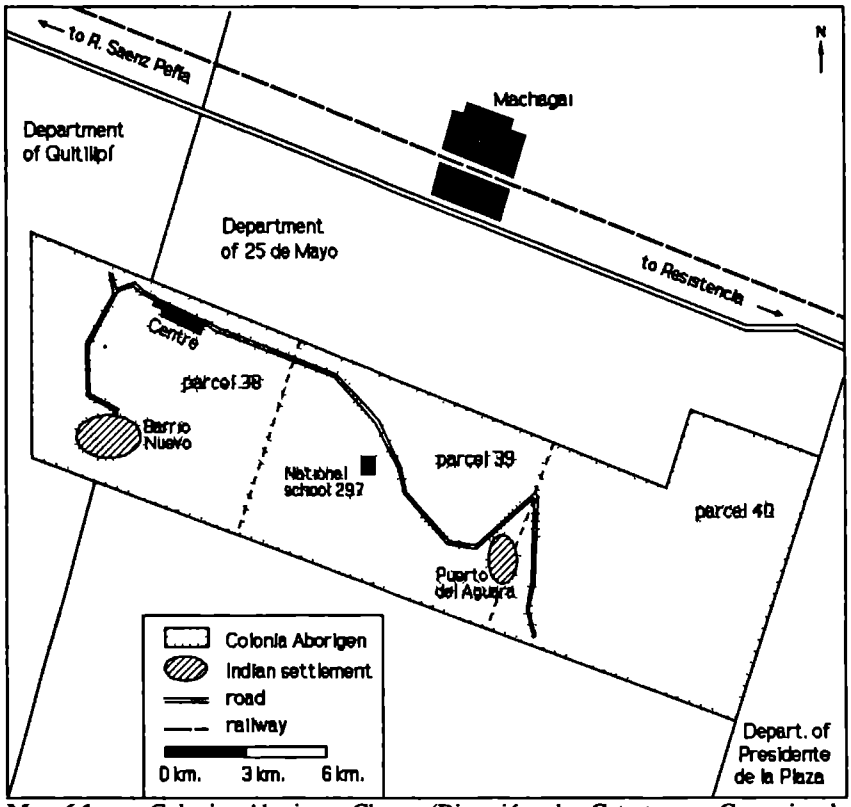
In spite of the fact that a large area in Chaco has been reserved for he Indians, the position of the communities residing in the reservations s extremely insecure. In a number of cases, the *Instituto de Colonización*, charged with the administration of public property in the province, offered land for sale which in fact had been reserved for the ndigenous population (Bray, 1989, p. 11). Old national and recent provincial decrees that granted the Indian occupiers of these areas the ight of usufruct, were ignored by the institution. The IDACH, which is supposed to protect the reserved areas, did nothing to prevent the sales (CEC, 1989, p. 20; El Territorio, 12-9-1986; Norte, 13-10-86).

6.3 The Mocoví and Toba of Colonia Aborigen Chaco

In the Argentine province of Chaco, some ten kilometres distance of the village Machagai and seven kilometres south of the road from Resistencia to Roque Saenz Peña, is situated the Indian reservation Colonia Aborigen. The largest part of Colonia Aborigen is situated in the department of 25 de Mayo, the western part, however, is in the department of Quitilipí. Colonia Aborigen covers an area of 22,575 hectares of land which has been demarcated and fenced. The reservation consists of three parcels; parcel 39 and 40 in the department of 25 de Mayo, and parcel 38 in both the department of 25 de Mayo and in Quitilipí (see map 6.1).

Colonia Aborigen was founded on the 27th of October 1911. At the time, the colony was called Napalpí, which in Quechua means "cemetery", and refers to the bloodshed among the Indian people of the Chaco during the military campaigns of the years before. Napalpí was the first Indian *reducción* that was established in the Argentinean Chaco. The purpose of the Indian *reducciones* was to train the Indians for paid work and to "conserve" the Indian labour force when the labour was not needed. The *reducción* was placed under the administration of a *Comisión Honoraria de Reducciones de Indios* (Iñigo Carrera, 1982, pp. 23-4; Isabello de Onis, 1986, pp. 62-4).

During the first years after the establishment of Napalpí, the Indians lived mainly on the basis of lumbering and selling timber, and hunting and gathering. Since it was the explicit goal of the *reducciones* to force the Indians into labour, the *Comisión Honoraria* decided in 1915 that



Map 6.1 Colonia Aborigen Chaco (Dirección de Catastro y Gerencia de Topografía del Instituto del Colonización de la provincia del Chaco, 1975)

the Indians were to apply themselves to paid work in the harvesting of cotton and to cotton production in the colony itself. Therefore, in order to improve the revenues of the *reducción* as well as to teach the Indians how to produce cotton, small-scale agricultural production was introduced on the reservation and at the same time the administration stopped buying timber from the Indians. Cotton fields were parcelled out and seeds and tools were distributed.

The policy only partially succeeded, mainly because many Indians regularly left the *reducción* and its cotton fields to work at the sugar plantations in Tucumán, Salta and Jujuy. A national decree, promulgated in 1924, was to solve this problem and forbade the Indians from leaving

the Chaco (Cordeu and Siffredi, 1971, pp. 58-9). From then on, all Indians were to support the growth of cotton production, both inside and outside the reservation. In addition to this, another measure was taken to increase revenue from the *reducciones*. It was decided that the Indians in Napalpí had to pay over 15% of their income from the cultivation of cotton to the *Comisión Honoraria* (Cordeu and Siffredi, 1971, p. 53; Ubertalli, 1987, pp. 63-4).

These two measures tipped the scale for many Toba and Mocoví in Napalpí and in 1924 they went on strike. Many authors confirm that the social unrest that followed the strike manifested itself as a religious and messianic movement (e.g. Iñigo Carrera, 1982, p. 36; Cordeu and Siffredi, 1971, p. 62; Ubertalli, 1987, p. 65). Mocoví and Toba Indians joined forces and not only rejected the economic dominance of the *Criollos*, but also stood up to the white people and culture in general. The revolt was finally violently suppressed and 200 Toba and Mocoví were killed (Bray, 1989, p. 6; Iñigo Carrera, 1982, p. 36).

After the revolt in 1924, the Indians in Napalpí came to depend almost exclusively on paid work for local cotton farmers. Wages were low, the work was only temporary, and poverty among the Indians was severe. In 1933 a serious drought ruined the cotton harvest in the region. This not only meant that paid work for the Indians was scarce, but also that the income from their individual plots was lost and many fell below the subsistence level. Again, groups of Indians, a large part coming from Napalpí, organized themselves in order to improve their living conditions and to break free from white dominance. Like the revolt of 1924, the movement was violently suppressed (Iñigo Carrera, 1982, p. 42). From then on resistance was broken and the Indians had no other choice than to accept administration.

By 1935, the number of Indians living in Napalpí had increased substantially and amounted to 3,644. At that time, 1,100 hectares of land within the reservation were being cultivated with cotton. In fact, the colony was economically successful and the authorities were content that the problems in the colony were finally solved. In 1937, the population of Napalpí was incorporated into the civil register (Bertone, 1985, pp. 128-9). During the period that followed, the Indians in Napalpí kept the usufruct of the land. Meanwhile, however, this part of the Chaco had become a highly productive region where land prices went up. The Indian reservation was increasingly at risk of being illegally occupied by *Criollos* (Cordeu and Siffredi, 1971, p. 54). When the provincial authorities of Chaco gained autonomy in 1951, the national decree that

had established the Indian reservation Napalpí, which by that time had been renamed Colonia Aborigen, was not renewed.

Nowadays, Colonia Aborigen is still one of the Indian reservations in the province of Chaco. The last census held in 1988 by the IDACH indicated that there were 2,296 Indians living in the colony of whom 242 were Mocoví, 2,052 Toba and 2 Wichí. Many inhabitants, however, believe that many more people live on the reservation.[2]

The centre of the colony is situated in the north-western part of the reservation. This centre is in fact a small village where basic services such as shops, a hospital, schools, a post office and a police station have been established. Employment in the village is offered by a saw-mill and a small brick-yard, and by the IDACH as well as the municipality of Quitilipí that have established suboffices in the centre of Colonia Aborigen. Most buildings and houses in the centre date back to the early years of the colony at the beginning of the 20th century, and in a way the centre is a quiet, pretty place. In 1991 it was estimated that some 600 people live more or less permanently in approximately one hundred and twenty houses in and around the village.

Apart from the centre, there are two settlements in Colonia Aborigen; Barrio Nuevo, situated some three kilometres to the south, and Puerto del Aguara, located some 15 kilometres east of the centre. Both settlements have some basic services like a church and a small primary school. The Indians do not, however, live exclusively in these villages, many families have settled alongside the roads or on any spot within the reservation. The majority of the inhabitants of Colonia Aborigen live in the parcels 38 and 39 (see map 6.1).

Colonia Aborigen is not home to a single ethnic group, but is inhabited by both Toba and Mocoví Indians, and besides these by a small minority of *Criollos*. The fact that Toba and Mocoví Indians live together is not surprising as both groups belong to the Guaycuruan linguistic family and have always maintained friendly contact with each other (Métraux, 1946, p. 220).

In Colonia Aborigen, both the Toba and the Mocoví find themselves in their traditional territory. In the 17th century, when most

[2] In September 1991 a short fieldwork was carried out in the colony during which interviews were held with ten at randomly chosen Indian households and several "key-informants".

Guaycuruan groups adopted horse riding as a means of transport, many Mocoví communities migrated to the south where they made both friendly and hostile contact with the *Criollos* of Santa Fé. A large part of the Mocoví assimilated with the *Criollos* and disappeared as an ethnic group (Altamirano et al., 1987, p. 16; Magrassi, 1989, p. 90). The Mocoví in Santa Fé who had managed to preserve their culture and way of life, were subdued or forced to flee at the beginning of the 20th century during the military campaigns against the Indian population. Most Mocoví communities returned to their original territory in the far less populated Chaco (Tomasini, 1987, pp. 40-1). There, they took up cotton cultivation as a means of subsistence, or gained temporary work as labourers for lumbering industries or cotton farmers (Martinez-Crovetto, 1968, pp. 4-5; Tomasini, 1987, p. 44).

The original territory of the Toba Indians was very large and extended from the Pilcomayo river in the north as far south as the Salado river, and from the Paraná river in the east about halfway through the Chaco region westwards (Métraux, 1946, p. 221). In the 1940s, many Toba in search for work went to the cities in the fringe areas of the Chaco and settled in *barrios* in the outskirts of the cities. About half the Toba population still resides in rural areas.

According to the Argentinean indigenist census held in 1968, there were 2,876 Mocoví Indians living in the country of which 1,659 lived in the province of Chaco. The Toba were the most numerous Indian group in Argentina, numbering 17,062. 13,455 Toba lived in the province of Chaco (Bartolomé, 1972, p. 432). Other sources give higher estimates. Serbín (1981, p. 412), for instance, cites the *Servicio Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas* by giving a total of 32,639 Toba and 8,945 Mocoví, and Saizar (1989, pp. 29 and 45) estimates the total number of Argentinean Toba to be as high a 60,000 while for the Mocoví she gives a figure of 5,000.

Although the Toba and Mocoví have always maintained friendly contact, they never lived in mixed communities. Today, the Toba and Mocoví in Colonia Aborigen still live somewhat apart. Nearly all Mocoví of Colonia Aborigen live in Barrio Nuevo where every family has its own piece of land, most of them neatly fenced in. In 1988, however, a number of Toba families also settled in Barrio Nuevo, because their original settlement, which was located further south, was flooded several years in succession. Nowadays, the northern part of Barrio Nuevo is inhabited by Toba while the Mocoví live more to the south. Puerto del Aguara and the centre are Toba settlements although in

the centre some *Criollo* families have also settled. The *Criollos* work in the schools, the municipality and the hospital, and run the shops. Some *Criollos* have a small *chacra*, like most Indian families, where they cultivate cotton.

For income, the Indians of Colonia Aborigen still largely depend on paid work. Cotton farming has, however, declined substantially since the 1960s with as a result that opportunities for work in the harvest have decreased. Present-day agriculture in Chaco focuses more on cereals which tends to employ far less labour than cotton (D'Alessio, 1969, p. 398; Osuna, 1976, p. 112). Nevertheless, many people in Colonia Aborigen do work during the cotton harvest although they complain that they have to travel further every year. Some still manage to find employment in the near vicinity of the settlement, for instance in Quitilipí, others have to go as far as Villa Angela or Castelli to find a job. Most cotton workers reside on the property of their employer during the time of harvest, and consequently, a large portion of the male population of Colonia Aborigen is absent from about November to March.

The majority of Indian households on the reservation has a *chacra* of its own. The size of these fields ranges from two to five hectares. Most families almost exclusively cultivate cotton on these fields, a small minority also produce some maize or potatoes to supplement their diet. As a result of the fact that many Indians leave Colonia Aborigen from November to March, the production on the Indian fields on the reservation is of secondary importance because of labour shortage during time of harvest. Another constraint for cotton production in the colony is the fact that substantial parts are *áreas bajas* which tend to flood several months every year. These inundated lands are unsuitable for agriculture.

Keeping animals is a relatively unimportant source of income for the Indians in Colonia Aborigen. Most families keep some chicken around the house, but I never saw a family with more than four. One respondent's family had seven cows which they kept for milk and meat, but in this respect they were an exception. Many households have horses, some two, some three and one even six. The horses are kept primarily for transportation and for ploughing. An advantage of keeping horses instead of other animals is that horses can survive on flooded pasture for a considerable period.

During the lean months of the year, mostly from August till November because there is no work in the cotton harvest, the Indians

fall back on hunting, gathering and fishing. The Indians say, however, that the region no longer offers favourable conditions for hunting and gathering since most parts have been cleared for agriculture.

The Indian people of Colonia Aborigen have organized themselves in an *Asociación Comunitaria* (co-operative). The co-operative was founded in the early 1970s to support the Indian farmers by purchasing seeds and tools and by marketing the cotton. It is administered by a chosen president and vice-president and fourteen other members of council. Many people in Colonia Aborigen regard the president of the co-operative as the leader of the community.

In the course of time, the *Asociación Comunitaria* has extended its activities towards the promotion of Indian interests at large. Alongside supporting the Indian farmers, it tries to raise funds and credit from international aid organizations, as well as participating in local politics on Indian affairs. The co-operative comes under the IDACH and has no budget or political power of its own.

Recently, the *Asociación Comunitaria* has been subdivided into one head co-operative, the *Asociación Madre*, and two sub-co-operatives, one exclusively of the Mocoví segment of the population and one of a group of Toba that disagrees with the policy of the *Asociación Madre*. Up till now, the *Asociación Madre* has the largest number of *socios* and is the only one that has been granted legal recognition by the IDACH.[3]

6.4 Land tenure in Colonia Aborigen

It is beyond doubt that the authorities of the province of Chaco attach a high importance to the opening up of provincial territory for economic development. Colonization programmes to encourage the spread of cotton production and livestock raising have been established on several occasions and large areas of public property have been sold to private investors (see e.g Borrini and Schaller, 1981; CEC, 1989, p. 20; I.I.E.F,

[3] Many Indian communities in the province of Chaco have established *Asociaciones Comunitarias*. In the 1970s, René James Sotelo, a charismatic advocate for the promotion of Indian rights who had received his eduction in Mexico, travelled widely through the region holding meetings with the Indians and encouraging them to organize themselves. His progressive ideas about Indian independence and self-government were adopted by most communities that reacted by establishing co-operatives. At the entrance of Colonia Aborigen, a large statue has been erected in memory of Sotelo (Norte, 15-5-87).

1968, pp. 97-9).

What are the plans of the government with the areas that in the past were reserved for the Indian people? What priority is given by the authorities to the definitive recognition of Indian landownership?

On the 12th of September 1986, the *Instituto de Colonización de Tierras Fiscales* of the province of Chaco offered for sale 50,000 hectares of land which were situated within the Indian reservation Colonia El Teuco (El Territorio, 12-9-86; Norte, 13-10-86). Colonia El Teuco, established in February 1924, covers an area of 150,000 hectares and is the largest *Reserva Aborigen* in Chaco. With the violation of the Indian rights to this land, the discussion about the status and the future of the areas in the province reserved for Indians flared up. The Indians, supported by several organizations that fight for the recognition of Indian rights, claimed that the reservations should be actually transferred to the Indian communities. The *Instituto de Colonización* on the other hand, held the view that the reservations should be regarded as common public property which therefore could be offered for sale. The institution emphasised that there was no legal reason why these areas should be treated differently in this respect. As a result of the discussion, the sale of the 50,000 hectares of land was delayed, but not cancelled.

On 15th of May 1987, the indigenist statute 3.258, *Ley de las Comunidades Aborígenes*, was passed by the provincial parliament. The enactment of the statute was an important turning point in the indigenist policy of the province of Chaco, because the statute allows the official transference of property to Indian individuals as well as to Indian communities. With respect to Indian reservations, the statute states: "The statute also facilitates the transference of definitive land titles to those who now have provisional titles" (art. 8)(translation by the author). From this article it is clear, that it is the government's intention to convert the provisional status of Indian reservations into a legal acknowledgement of Indian property rights with regard to these areas. Further on, however, the statute reads: "In awarding definitive property deeds to Indian communities, priority will be given to those who have no land at all or occupy land which is inadequate" (ibid). From this passage it appears that Indian communities residing on reservations are indeed considered for legal landownership, but that communities without any right to a specific piece of land take precedence. Until now, statute 3.258 has hardly improved the actual situation for Indian communities living on the reservations.

For the Indian reservations in Chaco, the risk of losing territory as a result of illegal occupancy by outsiders or of efforts by the *Instituto de Colonización* to sell land has not been reduced. By 1991, the sale of 50,000 hectares was still pending in Colonia El Teuco, and in many other reservations *Criollos* were illegally taking possession of parts of the reserved territories.

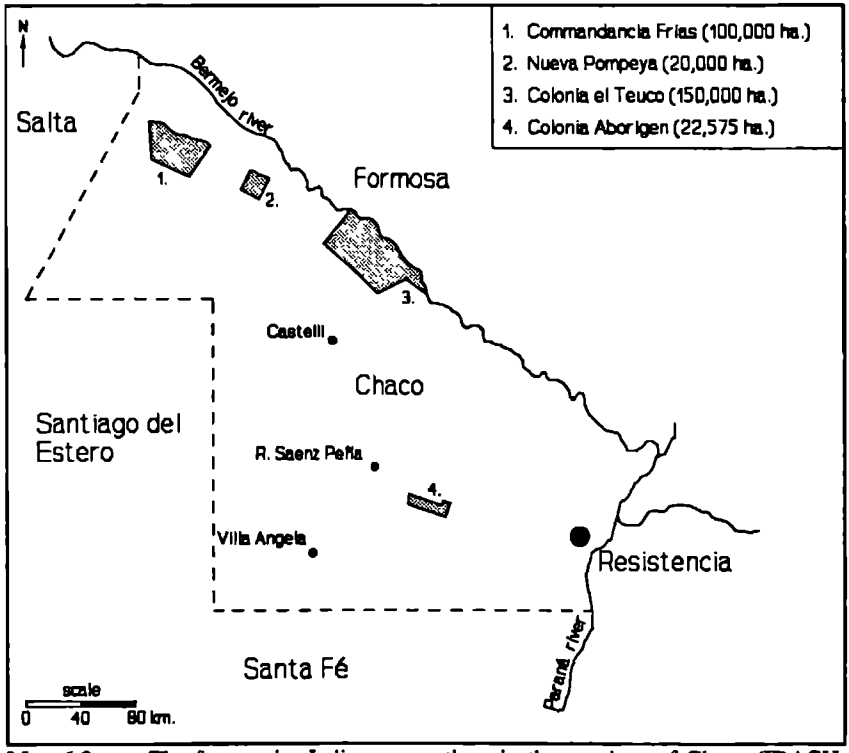
The Indians of Colonia Aborigen could not avoid the illegal occupancy of their territory either. Over a number of years, three *Criollo* neighbours have taken possession of 3,160 hectares of land that belong to the reservation. In parcel 40, where Indian population is relatively sparse, one of them occupies 2,500 hectares of land, another 600 hectares and the third a small plot of 60 hectares. The Toba and Mocoví of Colonia Aborigen have always held the view that there is nothing they can do to drive off the *Criollos* because it concerns "politically powerful people".

In 1990, the conflict came to a head because two of the three *Criollo* settlers, those who had taken possession of the largest areas, had started procedures to obtain legal ownership of the land concerned. Moreover, the *Instituto de Colonización*, which in fact had nothing to do with the reservations since these are supposed to fall under the administration of the IDACH, could think of no reason why this land should not be sold, and responded positively to the requests. Apparently, the indigenist statute 3.258 did not provide sufficient legal ground to prevent these areas from being sold.

Indians and indigenist organizations protested against the possible sale of the reserved land and finally, after strong pressure, the governor of Chaco intervened. Four decrees, involving the four major Indian reservations of Chaco, were promulgated in January 1991. In the decrees it was laid down that the areas known as Colonia Aborigen (decree 495), Colonia El Teuco (decree 116), Commandancia Frias (decree 480) and Nueva Pompeya (decree 494) are for the exclusive use of Indian people (see map 6.2). The areas are to be regarded as Indian reservations and therefore cannot be sold by the government. Non-Indian occupiers of the areas concerned are called upon to leave the Indian territories immediately. Next to this, the decrees prescribe that the property rights of the reservations are to be transferred from the *Instituto de Colonización* to the IDACH. For handing over the property rights to the Indian communities themselves, or in case of Colonia Aborigen to the *Asociación Comunitaria*, the decrees refer to the statute 3.258 (described earlier in this section).

With the promulgation of these four decrees, the sale of land from the four reservations has been suspended. The reservations, however, are not yet completely safe. As long as the Indian communities do not possess the definitive titles of their lands, problems are likely to recur in the future. The decrees did take the pressure off for the time being, but did not solve the problem as it should be.

In spite of provincial decree 495/91, the illegally occupancy by three *Criollos* of over 3,000 hectares of land in parcel 40 of Colonia Aborigen has continued. In September 1991, they did not intend to leave the property although they had stopped their efforts to obtain the land officially.



Map 6.2 The four major Indian reservations in the province of Chaco (IDACH, 1990)

We may wonder why the IDACH, which after all is the provincial representative body of Indian interests, does not intervene more actively

when it comes to defending Indian territory. Several reasons explain the somewhat passive role played by the IDACH.

Firstly, the division of tasks between the IDACH and the *Instituto de Colonización* is not improving the efficiency of both organizations. The IDACH is responsible for the administration of the Indian reservations while the *Instituto de Colonización* has full authority over all public property. From a legal point of view, the Indian reservations can be regarded as public property and this often gives rise to confusion or even conflicts. In cases of conflict between the *Instituto de Colonización* and the IDACH, the latter also seems subordinate and is forced to fit in.

On the other hand it seems as if the IDACH is not keen on settling the Indian land question efficiently. Although the current indigenist legislation does offer opportunities for successful policy in this respect, the IDACH does not avail itself of them. Since the enactment of statute 3.258, only a small area of land in the province of Chaco has been actually transferred to Indian people. Until now, not one Indian community has managed to obtain a communal deed.

Financial problems of the IDACH figure in this lack of effective policy. According to the law, land can only be transferred to Indian communities when it has been demarcated and surveyed. The IDACH is responsible for the costs of demarcation and survey, but it simply lacks the budget to do so. Currently, the IDACH is trying to raise funds from international development aid organizations in order to strengthen its financial position. Up to now, these efforts have not been very successful.[4] The financial problems of the IDACH should, however, not be exaggerated. In September 1991, local newspapers repeatedly reported upon the extravagant manner in which the IDACH spends its budget. The IDACH had asserted, for instance, that in three months time it had spent US $326,100 "on fuel". When asked to explain this, nobody had a plausible answer (Norte, 23-9-91; Norte, 27-9-91).

Many Indians in Colonia Aborigen gave the impression that they put little faith in the IDACH. The organization is remote from daily life in the colony and the Indians put more confidence in the *Asociación Comunitaria* which they consider their own subdivision of the IDACH. Provincial politics are distant for most Indians in Colonia Aborigen, who, besides, are on the whole badly informed about political matters

[4] Information obtained from the *Intervenor* of the IDACH, in August 1990.

and legal affairs concerning the Indian reservations. Only one of the interviewed inhabitants, in fact the president of the *Asociación Comunitaria*, had heard about decree 495/91. From the ten interviewed Indians, no more than five were able to explain what statute 3.258 is about.

For as far as landownership is concerned, many Indians hold the view that the land of Colonia Aborigen is the property of the *Asociación Comunitaria*. Three Indians even claim to posses the title of their individual plot of land, a title which they have obtained from the *Asociación*. This rests on a false notion, however. The *Asociación* indeed gave out provisional titles to individual Indian farmers, but for no other reason than to distribute the available land for the time being. The titles have no legal value.

Those Toba and Mocoví that are aware of the fact that Colonia Aborigen is a reservation and therefore the property of the provincial authorities, emphasize that they want to obtain the title of the land. A few consider the fact that the *Asociación Comunitaria* has obtained its *personería jurídica* an important advantage in this respect. The president of the *Asociación* said: "We are trying to obtain the title of this land. The employees of the IDACH promised us a lot, but so far they haven't done anything tangible. In earlier days, they encouraged people to ask for individual titles, but we don't want that, we want a communal title for the complete area of the reservation."

For some inhabitants, the fact that they do not possess the property rights of the land leaves them feeling troubled. One of them expressed himself clearly when he said: "The story goes that one day a very rich man will turn up and buy the entire area from the government. We'll then be sent to the north. As long as we don't have the title, I cannot feel safe."

Others gave evidence that they worry about the *Criollos* who have settled on the reservation and those who have illegally taken possession of land in parcel 40. These Indians indeed feel that the reservation should be for Indians only, but at the same time fear that the *Criollos* will get their hands on more land. That this fear is justified to a certain extent, appears from the words of a *Criollo* living in the centre of Colonia Aborigen: "I think it's about time the Indians received the titles of their land. Then they can chose, they can either work the land or sell it. I suppose most of them will sell it and that's good for me, for I want to buy a *chacra*. I will be careful not to buy low land as I don't want my land to be flooded. It'll be good to work on the land".

In general, however, many Indians feel somewhat distant from politics and do not experience the struggle for land in the colony as something that concerns them too. Most of them feel safe and content where they are now, and look with confidence into the future. One said to me: "Of course we can all stay here. Nobody can take this land because it's ours, it has always been ours, we've grown up here. Besides, they cannot ignore us just like that as there are far too many of us."

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter it has become clear that Indian reservations are public properties placed at the disposal of Indian communities for an undefined period of time. The legal status of reservations, however, is not a guarantee that these areas will not be occupied by others. Decrees that establish Indian reservations can be overruled by new decrees or statutes or ignored because other interests are at stake. In the course of time, many Indian groups in the Gran Chaco have been deprived of their land although they enjoyed the usufruct of it.

Colonia Aborigen Chaco has been presented as an example of Indian reservations in the Gran Chaco. About 2,500 Toba and Mocoví Indians, or some 500 families, occupy an area of 22,575 hectares of land which is situated in the traditional homelands of these peoples. Not all of the land is suitable for exploitation, however, as the colony is situated in a swampy region where large tracts are inundated for several months of the year. The major sources of income for the inhabitants of Colonia Aborigen are paid work outside, and the cultivation of cotton inside the reservation.

For as far as land tenure is concerned, Colonia Aborigen has to contend with the illegal occupancy of some 3,000 hectares by three *Criollos* in the eastern part of the reservation. A recently promulgated decree is to secure the reservation against the official purchase of these 3,000 hectares by the *Criollo* occupiers. The illegal occupancy, however, has continued.

The insecure situation could easily be allayed by handing over the title of the land to the *Asociación Comunitaria*, a legally recognised body representing the Indian inhabitants of Colonia Aborigen. The land has been surveyed and demarcated, a census has been held and the people of the colony have requested the title several times. Until now,

for reasons unknown, the IDACH has continuously delayed final settlement of the matter.

7. INDIAN COMMUNITIES AND LAND OF THE CHURCHES: THE LENGUA OF COLONIA LA ARMONÍA

7.1 Introduction

Although most religious missions initially started work in the Gran Chaco with the exclusive purpose of preaching the gospel among the Indian people, in the course of time many missions have supplemented their work with efforts to alleviate the most urgent problems of the Indians. Nowadays, providing socio-economic programmes, health care and schooling facilities for the Indian people are regarded as a substantial part of the missionary role.

Since the loss of land has increasingly become one of the most urgent problems for the Indian population in the area, some religious institutions have even gone as far as purchasing land for the Indians in order to offer these people a place where they can live in peace. Nowadays, a fair number of Indian communities live on land which one of the religious missions has bought for them. The Indians have not obtained the property rights of these lands, but nevertheless can use these lands as they think appropriate.

One of these communities is Colonia La Armonía, a settlement of Lengua Indians in the central part of the Paraguayan Chaco. The Lengua in La Armonía occupy 4,700 hectares of land which is the property of the ASCIM, a Mennonite organization charged with the task of supporting the Indian population that lives in and near the Mennonite colonies.

The Mennonites take a somewhat exceptional position among the religious missions that work in the Gran Chaco. In contrast to other missions that came to the Chaco aiming to convert the Indians, the Mennonites came to the Chaco primarily with the goal of finding a place to settle. Initially, contacts between Mennonites and Indians were not actually sought by the Mennonites, but occurred just because they had settled in the Indians' territory. Once contact was established, however, the involvement of the Mennonites with the Indians, became much like that of the missions. They preached among them and helped

them when needed. Over the years, the Indian aid programme of the Mennonites has extended enormously and become the largest programme in the region. Nowadays, some 15,000 Indians have more or less permanent contact with the Mennonite colonies and well over 9,000 of them have been settled on land that the Mennonites purchased for them (ASCIM, 1990c, pp. 3 and 13).

7.2 Indian communities on land of the Churches

Missionary work among the hunters and gatherers of the Gran Chaco has always been frustrated by the fact that the Indians were not sedentary peoples. Missionaries could not maintain permanent contact with the people they wanted to convert because tradition, culture and the manner in which the Indians obtained their livelihood was based on nomadism within an extended territory. Attempts to evangelize the Indians therefore frequently went hand in hand with efforts to settle them. During the first decades of missionary activity in the Gran Chaco, it was an arduous task to keep the Indians in the missions. After the Indians had lived at the missions for some weeks, they usually disappeared into the forest.

When colonization in the Gran Chaco advanced and the Indian people increasingly lost access to their hunting territories, the Indian communities often had no other option than to seek refuge in one of the missions that had been established. This time, they seemed more inclined to stay in the missions permanently, because life had become extremely difficult for them in many parts of the region.

As the mission stations became more or less continuously populated, the missionaries started thinking of offering the Indians work as they could not afford to feed the Indians from their own pockets. They often decided to promote agriculture among them and to this end purchased arable fields near the missions. Some missions also engaged in livestock.

The fact that, in the 1970s, many religious organizations decided to purchase land for the Indians, brought a new element to missionary work. Purchasing land was no longer done only because it served evangelization, but became a goal in itself. Indians had to be protected against the advancing colonization frontier that deprived them of their land and resources.

Many examples illustrate the fact that in the 1970s and 1980s, missionary organizations valued the purchase of land for the Indians. The *Junta Unida de Misiones* (JUM), a co-operative organization of various Protestant Churches in the north of Argentina, purchased 5,700 hectares of land in 1978 and 1979 in order to solve the land problems of three Toba communities (Wallis, 1985, p. 11). The Franciscan congregation purchased land in both the Paraguayan and the Argentine Chaco. In 1970, it acquired 1,150 hectares in the Paraguayan Chaco in a place called San Francisco de Asissi which today is the home of some 600 Toba Qom (Chase-Sardi, 1990, pp. 176-80; Regehr, 1979, pp. 169-70). In 1983, the provincial authorities of Salta granted the Franciscans a parcel of 1,000 hectares for the purpose of settling Indians that were in contact with the congregation (de la Cruz, 1989a, p. 15). The Anglican Church also engaged in the purchase of land for Indian communities. In Argentina, the Anglican organization *Initiativa Cristiana* (IC), was responsible for the purchase of 8,500 hectares of land between 1976 and 1980 (Initiativa Cristiana, 1980, p. 1; Wallis, 1985, p. 22). In Paraguay, the Anglican settlement programme *La Herencia* resulted in the purchase of three pieces of land between 1980 and 1985, which together cover an area of no less than of 42,000 hectares (Stunnenberg, 1987, p. 107).

In the 1970s and 1980s, most religious institutions in the Gran Chaco that worked with Indian people, did not have the financial means to buy the lands independently, especially since the prices tended to rise as soon as it became known that the Church was interested in buying. Some religious organizations could fall back upon associated Churches in the western world, others had to apply for funding from international development organizations in Western Europe or the United States. In many cases, the local religious institutions that had contact with the Indians and intended to purchase land for them, in fact negotiated as intermediaries between international aid organizations, the Indians, and the owners of the land involved.

Religious institutions that purchased land for the Indians nearly always continued supporting the Indians after they had settled on the land. In general, the secured areas were too small to enable the Indians to live on the basis of hunting and gathering. Therefore, most missionary teams made great efforts to accompany the Indians in finding new modes of subsistence. Often, farming was taken up as an appropriate solution for the lack of income, in other cases, missionaries tried to encourage various industrial activities, lumbering timber and handicrafts.

Next to income, the missions became permanent dwelling places for rather large groups of Indians, and subsequently had to offer a number of services like a school, a medical centre, sanitation, and often a small shop. Usually, the missionaries went to live on the land which they bought for the Indians, in order to take care of these arrangements themselves.

Since the mid-1980s, many religious institutions have no longer regarded buying land for Indian communities a sensible policy. The indigenist land acts, promulgated between 1981 and 1987, assign national and provincial authorities the task of granting the Indian people sufficient land. Instead of spending large amounts of money on the purchase of land, many religious organizations have made it their policy to support the Indians in their legal claims for land, and ensuring that the authorities honour their obligations in this respect. Nowadays, legal assistance is more important than raising funds for the purchase of land (e.g. ENM, 1985).

In spite of the fact that current legislation provides Indians with the possibility of claiming land, some communities end up living on land of a religious institution after all. Sometimes, procedures for obtaining land from the government can be extremely difficult and time consuming, and Churches may decide to hasten the process by buying the land conventionally. With some locations, this may be the only feasible solution. A short time after the acquisitions have been made, however, the properties can be transferred to the Indian communities, that is, providing these have obtained their *personería jurídica.*

In other cases, Indian communities have put forward requests for specific pieces of land although these communities have not obtained the status of *personería jurídica.* When these requests are met by the authorities, the lands cannot be transferred to the Indians themselves, but only to legally recognised bodies representing the Indians. Often, religious organizations are able to fulfil this role. Once the communities involved have obtained their *personería jurídica,* the deeds will be transferred to the Indians.

7.3 The Mennonite settlement programme

Mennonite history started in the early 16th century when the Reformation broke the hegemony of the Catholic Church of Rome. In

1525, Ulrich Zwingly, a Swiss reformer, started the movement of the Brethren, also known as the Anabaptists. The movement of the Brethren spread quickly but at the same time was severely persecuted. Many leaders were put to death and some took flight. A small group arrived in Friesland, Holland, where a Catholic priest, called Menno Simons, was attracted to the theological views of the movement. Menno Simons joined the movement in 1536 and would later become its spiritual leader. Soon, the Brethren became known as the Mennonites.

Mennonite theology and ideology have always prompted conflicts between the Mennonites and the civil authorities of the countries in which they settled. Pacifism, rejection of infant baptism, aversion to the "sinful world", the aspiration to live in isolation, and indifference towards secular authorities which resulted in their refusal to participate in military service and to pay taxes, were seldom accepted by the authorities. As a persecuted people, the Mennonites spread over the world. From Holland they went to Prussian states and to Russia. Others went to Canada and the United States.[1]

In 1926, the first Mennonites came from Canada to Paraguay where they settled in the interior of the Chaco. In 1927, they established the colony of Menno. The reason for coming to Paraguay was twofold. Firstly, at the beginning of the 20th century, the position of the Mennonites in Canada was deteriorating and the need to find a place where they could live independently and in isolation became increasingly urgent (Hack, 1983, p. 103). The Chaco, as one of the most remote areas in the world, seemed to offer good opportunities in this respect. Secondly, the Paraguayan government, eager to colonize the largely barren Chaco, explicitly invited the Mennonites to settle in the country. The Paraguayan authorities even promulgated an act that granted the Mennonite settlers special privileges. Act 514 allowed the Mennonites, for instance, freedom of religion, exemption of military service, the freedom to administer education in German, and moreover an exemption from tax duties for a period of ten years (Klassen, 1988, pp. 53-5; Redekop, 1980, pp. 259-62; Siffredi, 1989, p. 516). In the 1930s, a second group of Mennonites from Russia settled in the Chaco because the Russian communist regime had made life difficult for them.

[1] For more information about Mennonite history and religion, the interested reader should consult: Derksen, 1988, pp. 43-78; Dürksen et al., 1980; Hack, 1961; Good and Good, 1979; Kameron-Gaaikema, 1975; Klassen, 1988; Klassen 1991; Plett, 1979; Redekop, 1973; Redekop, 1980; Regehr, 1979; Russo, 1983.

In 1931 these Mennonites founded the colony of Fernheim. A third group of Mennonites left Russia when the German army withdrew after World War II, and they founded the colony of Neuland in 1948 (Maybury-Lewis and Howe, 1980, p. 61).

When the Mennonites started to settle in the Chaco, there were only a few hundred Lengua Indians living in this region. Although the Mennonites had indirectly bought the land from the *Compañía Carlos Casado*, they decided that they had to "buy" the land from the Lengua as well. For an old pair of trousers, a few metres of cloth and some food, they settled the matter with the Lengua (Chase-Sardi, 1972, p. 184; ENM, 1984, p. 175; Grünberg, 1982, p. 44).

Soon, the Lengua started to provide the labour that was needed in the colonies in return for which they received small salaries. Large areas were cleared and agriculture was introduced in the Paraguayan Chaco. As the demand for labour in the colonies increased and other parts of the Chaco became gradually occupied by colonists, more and more Indians, first only Lengua but later also Nivaklé, came to the Mennonite colonies in search of food, work and protection.

As early as 1932 the Mennonites felt the need to take care of the large numbers of Indians that kept coming to the colonies. They set up the missionary organization *Licht den Indianer* that aimed to evangelize the Indians, provide them with basic health care and education, and settle them on small plots of land (Stahl, 1974, p. 114). The work of "Enlighten the Indians" was interrupted by the Chaco War, but continued afterwards. In 1955, the first Indian colony was established and the settlement was called Yalve Sanga. Only Indians that had been baptized were considered for participation in the project, a condition though, which would later be abandoned (ENM, 1984, p. 177; Hack, 1976, p. 12).

Since by the end of the 1950s the Indian population in the Mennonite colonies had increased to some 4,000 people, including Lengua, Sanapaná, Toba, Nivaklé, Guaraní Occidentales and Tapieté, the Mennonites were well aware that the facilities for settling the Indians had to be extended (Stahl, 1974, p. 135). In 1961, they installed the *Indianer Siedlungs Behörde* (ISB) that was to take care of the settlement of the Indians. In 1976, the work of the ISB was continued by the *Asociación de Servicios de Cooperación Indígena Mennonita* (ASCIM) that today is still responsible for the Mennonite settlement programme of the Indians.

The main objectives of the ASCIM are the settlement of the Indians in agricultural colonies, supporting them to integrate into national socio-economic life as farmers and artisans, and trying to create a favourable climate for the development of Indian Churches. In the association regulations of the ASCIM it is laid down that the work is also directed towards providing support that enables the Indians to help themselves; "giving seed instead of fruit" (ASCIM, 1976, p. 2; Klassen, 1991, p. 172). The policy of the ASCIM, which the Mennonites describe as the "partnership model", seeks a balance between integrating the Indians into the Paraguayan economy, more specifically into the economy of the Mennonite colonies, and encouraging the Indians to acquire self-government (Stahl, 1992, p. 18).

The present-day work of the ASCIM covers a wide range of activities. A health programme, supported by over thirty Indian and Mennonite employees who work in seven small clinics in various Indian settlements and in one modern hospital in Yalve Sanga, is directed towards curative and preventive health care. No less than fifty schools, some of them small but others with a number of courses, have been established in the Mennonite region in order to educate the Indian children. Professional training is provided by the *Escuela de Formación Hogareña* in Campo Alegre where the women are trained in domestic work, and by the *Centro de Capacitación Agrícola* in Casuarina where the men receive training in agriculture. Alongside this, institutions have been established to train Indian men and women as health workers and schoolteachers (ASCIM, 1992a, pp. 9-13 and 20-1; Klassen, 1991, pp. 173-83). The economic aspects of the ASCIM's programme are discussed below.

The work of the ASCIM has resulted in the establishment of twelve Indian agricultural colonies in the central part of the Paraguayan Chaco. In these colonies, Indians make a living on the basis of agrarian land use. Cotton, castor beans and peanuts are the main crops which are cultivated on family plots and sometimes on large communal fields. Livestock production has been started in the colonies as well and most Indian settlements also have an *estancia* to cover collective expenses. Co-ordination of farming rests with Mennonite agronomists who have been stationed in the colonies. A well-developed system of co-operation, which in fact is also employed by the Mennonite farmers themselves, has been introduced in the Indian colonies. The co-operatives provide the Indian farmers with machinery, credit, seed, tools, grocery stores and

advice, and moreover market the crops and cattle. Most Indian colonies are economically successful.

Although the ASCIM aims to integrate the Indians as farmers in the local and national economy, it has not yet fully accomplished this goal. Estimates indicate that at least some 40% of the income of the Indians in the settlements is earned outside the settlements where many of them engage in *changas* (ASCIM, 1990c, p. 8; Renshaw, 1988, pp. 337-8).

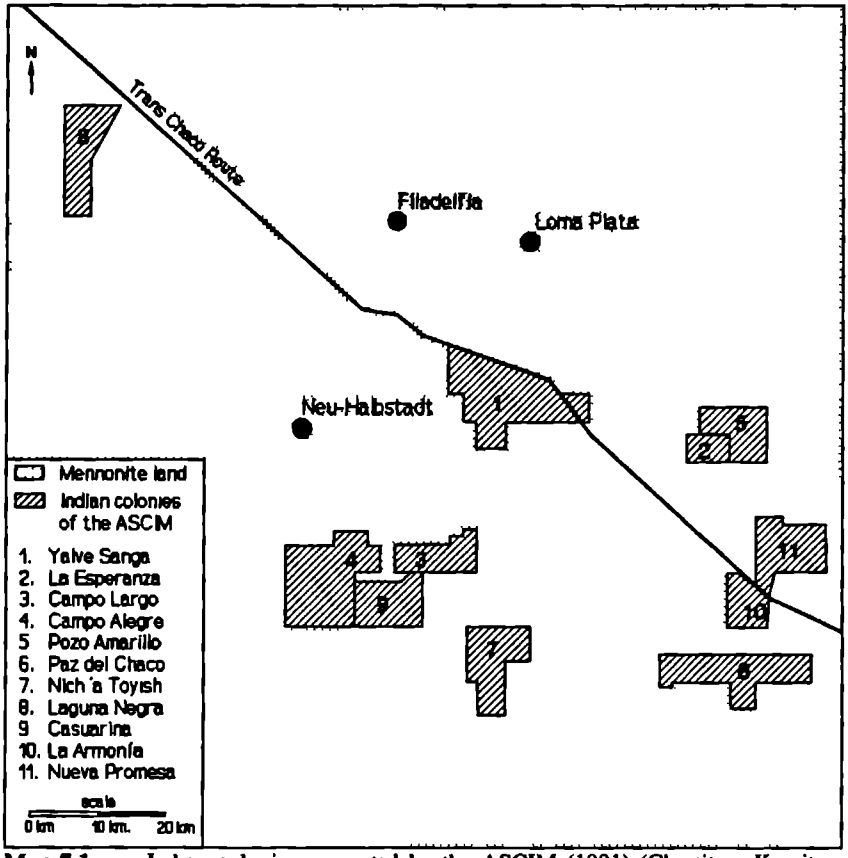
Table 7.1 Indian colonies supported by the ASCIM (1991)

Colony	Founded	Ethnic group	Inhabitants	Area (ha.)
Yalve Sanga Lengua	1955	Lengua	1,353	5,965
Yalve Sanga Nivaklé	1961	Nivaklé	1,423	9,884
La Esperanza	1962	Lengua / Sanapaná	820	3,697
Campo Largo	1963	Lengua	642	6,195
Campo Alegre	1964	Nivaklé	1,130	17,142
Pozo Amarillo	1966	Lengua / Toba	889	6,796
Paz del Chaco	1979	Lengua	1,120	11,909
Nich'a Toyish	1980	Nivaklé	456	10,520
Laguna Negra	1981	Guaraní-Ñandeva	785	7,500
Casuarina	1986	Nivaklé	437	8,262
La Armonía	1988	Lengua	252	4,700
Nueva Promesa	1988	Sanapaná	263	7,435
Total			9,570	100,005

(ASCIM, 1990c, p. 13; ASCIM, 1992a, p. 19; Dürksen et al. 1980, p. 150)

The twelve Indian colonies together cover an area of over 100,000 hectares which has been purchased by the Mennonites on behalf of the Indians. Some of the land was purchased long before the settlement programme had started and was reserved for Indian settlement. Nowadays, the ASCIM still has a substantial area of unissued land that in the future may serve for new Indian settlements. Official information from the INDI indicates that in December 1991, the ASCIM kept a reserve of 56,250 hectares of land. Other areas, however, have been purchased by the ASCIM more recently with the explicit goal of starting Indian settlements. Most pieces of land were acquired in the 1970s and 1980s with money obtained from foreign development aid organizations from Europe and the United States (see e.g. Hack, 1983, p. 111).

Recently, more land was purchased. In 1986, some US $218,000



Map 7.1 Indian colonies supported by the ASCIM (1991) (Chortitzer Komitee, 1987)

was made available by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) for the purchase of land for Indian settlements. The three Mennonite colonies themselves gathered US $58,593 for that purpose in 1987, and the International Mennonite Organization (IMO) supported the purchase with US $7,353 in 1988 (Klassen, 1991, p. 188). ASCIM's efforts to acquire land for Indian communities has always started from the principle that buying land conventionally from landowners in the region is the most effective policy. As a result, the ASCIM has hardly availed itself of the legal facilities offered in this respect by the statute 904/81.

Although the Indian population in the central part of the Chaco is

still growing, it does not seem very likely that the ASCIM will establish more settlements in the near future. The Mennonites fear that the Indian migration towards the colonies will not slow down if they continue starting new settlements. Additionally, they hold the view that those Indians in the Mennonite area that are interested in participating in the settlement programme of the ASCIM, have already obtained their land. Indian families in the colonies that have not been settled, do not wish to take part in the programme but, prefer to keep on living as paid workers in the *barrios obreros*.

An exception will be made for the children of already settled families. In fact, the first "second generation project" has already been started; in Casuarina the children of Indians from other ASCIM settlements have been given the opportunity to obtain their own plot of land (Mennoblatt, 1987(12), pp. 5-7).

The ASCIM aims to administer the edict set out in the statute 904/81 that each Indian family in the Paraguayan Chaco should be given the opportunity to settle on a plot of land of at least a hundred hectares, of which about one tenth is arable. Since, however, the population in the ASCIM's settlements is increasing, some Indian colonies are currently confronted with relative over-population. In 1990, six Indian communities were requesting additional land because their property had become too small.

To this day, the land of the twelve Indian colonies still is the property of the ASCIM. The director of the association emphasized, however, that the ASCIM intends to hand over the land to the Indian communities as soon as these are eligible for legal landownership. At the moment only two communities - Nich'a Toyish and Laguna Negra - have obtained the *personería jurídica*. The other ten communities have not started procedures that will enable them to obtain the legal recognition, and in fact they seem to take a somewhat indifferent position when it comes to acquiring the title of the land.

Despite the efforts of the ASCIM to encourage the Indians in this respect, for instance by giving courses and instructing Indian leaders about the indigenist legislation and its implications, we may doubt whether the Mennonites really aim to hand over the properties to the Indians in the short term. The director of the ASCIM elucidated the policy as follows: "When the Indians want to obtain ownership of the land, we will of course accept that, but they themselves have to take the initiative. If you ask me, I don't think they are up to it yet, it's better to wait with the actual transference a little longer. Look at what happened

in Nich'a Toyish. The community has obtained its *personería jurídica* and when the Nivaklé asked to be given the entire infrastructure of the project, we handed it over to them. Within a short time, however, they started to sell the tractors, they left the fields barren and the *cooperativa* went bankrupt. They asked us to resume working in Nich'a Toyish and we did. It was just to early for independence".

7.4 The Lengua of La Armonía

Colony La Armonía is situated on the Trans-Chaco route, some 380 kilometres from Asunción, and covers an area of 4,700 hectares. On the 3th of August 1988, 52 Lengua-Sur families, 229 people from the ASCIM settlement La Esperanza, settled on the land.

La Armonía is situated in the traditional territory of the Lengua Indians which stretched from the Paraguay river into the interior up to about the present-day location of the Mennonite colonies (see map 1.2). The Lengua are also known as the Enthlit which according to some authors is the name with which they refer to themselves (Chase-Sardi et al., 1990, p. 76). The Paraguayan indigenist census from 1981 indicates that there were 8,121 Lengua Indians living in the Paraguayan Chaco, a figure which corresponds with other sources (see e.g. Maybury-Lewis and Howe, 1980, p. 9).

Before the 52 Lengua families settled in La Armonía, they had wandered extensively through the entire Chaco. A part of the present-day population of La Armonía has come from Makthlawaiya, the Anglican mission in the *Chaco Bajo*. In 1955, the Anglican missionaries were forced to leave Makthlawaiya since funding had run out and the New Tribes Mission (NTM) took over. When the Anglicans returned to Makthlawaiya in 1963, however, many Lengua were unsatisfied because they did not receive the material help with which the NTM had provided them. With the help of the NTM, some thirty families left the station and went to La Promesa from where they moved to San Carlos, a mission of the NTM on the bank of the Paraguay river. It soon became clear that the Lengua could not get along with the missionaries at San Carlos and they decided to leave the NTM and ask the Mennonites for help. In 23 days, they walked a distance of over 250 kilometres. On arrival in the Mennonite colonies, the Lengua settled in La Esperanza where other Lengua Indians had previously settled. In 1975, the ASCIM arranged a more or less permanent settlement in La Esperanza since it

was assumed that the Lengua already living in the project were related to the Lengua who asked to be settled there.

This proved not to be the case. The group that had arrived from the Paraguay river were Lengua-Sur whereas the Lengua in La Esperanza were of the Lengua-Norte clan. Furthermore, La Esperanza had already been crowded before the Lengua-Sur arrived, but afterwards the situation became even more urgent. The ASCIM and the Indians searched for a solution and finally in 1988 the Lengua were given the opportunity to settle in the newly established colony of Laguna Millón, which in 1989 was renamed La Armonía.

In January 1992, La Armonía was inhabited by 65 Lengua families or an estimated 270 people.[2] In four years time the population had increased substantially as a result of natural growth and the immigration of families from outside the colony. A Mennonite couple has settled in La Armonía as well. She works as a nurse and is running a small clinic, and he is the *Wirtschafsberater*, the agronomist who co-ordinates agricultural production.

The Lengua live in six villages, *aldeas*, which are built as "street-villages" (see map 7.2). All houses are neatly lined up, mostly on one side of the road, and have a field behind them (see e.g. Hack, 1976, p. 27). *Aldea Una* is the centre of La Armonía. In the centre are the houses of the schoolteacher and the Mennonite personnel, a grocery store for basic provisions, an office of the co-operative, a school building, a medical clinic and two sheds for storing cotton and parking tractors and other machinery.

Besides the individual fields, there are two rather large fields of 16 and 30 hectares where the Lengua work collectively in growing cotton. The largest field is situated on the road, the smaller one on the east side of the colony. The private and communal fields cover nearly the entire area suited to agricultural use.

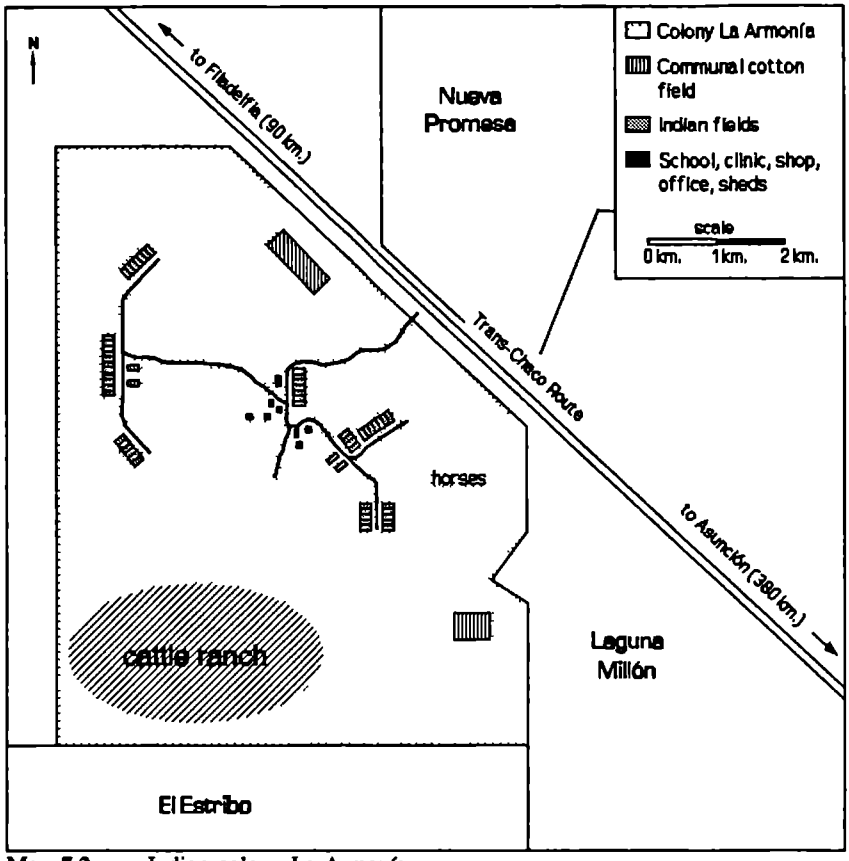
Improved pastures for keeping cattle have also been laid out. In the south there is an *estancia* for livestock farming and its pastures cover an area of some 300 hectares. At the beginning of 1992, the *estancia* had 174 head of cattle but these were all young and could not yet be sold (ASCIM, 1992a, pp. 28-30). 1993 will probably be the first

[2] In January 1992, a short period of fieldwork was carried out among the Lengua-Sur of La Armonía. Interviews were held with ten Indian households and with several "key-informants".

year that cattle will be sold and profits made. Besides the pastures of the ranch, there is a large area of bush land fenced in for keeping horses in the north east corner of the estate. In this manner, the land of colony La Armonía has been fully put to use. The Indians as well as the Mennonites hold the view that La Armonía cannot take in more people than currently live in the colony.

With these facilities, the Lengua in La Armonía are provided with a useful and extensive infrastructure. It is indeed the policy of the ASCIM to settle the Indians in such a way that they have a good chance of economic self-sufficiency. Inquiring after the investment made to start the project La Armonía, it appears that from 1988 to 1990, after the land had been purchased, no less than US $130,000 was made available for the construction of infrastructure. The money was granted by the IMO and the MCC (ASCIM, 1988b, p. 21, ibid, 1989b, p. 20, ibid, 1990c, p. 20). In addition to its financial input, the ASCIM organized in 1989 a collection among Mennonite livestock farmers to obtain a herd of cattle for the two new Indian settlements La Armonía and Nueva Promesa. With the motto "*Für jede Wirtschaft eine Kuh*" (for every household a cow), 160 calves were collected to start the ranches (ASCIM, 1990a, p. 6). The supervisor of the economic programme of the ASCIM wrote in 1987 that the expenses for the settlement of each Indian family in the central Chaco, aside from the actual purchase of the land, run into some US $2,500 (Mennoblatt, 1987(12), p. 6). The ASCIM hopes that after this initial investment, the settlements will be able to pay their own way. In general, after a few years of establishment, the Indian settlements indeed reach break-even point.

The Lengua in La Armonía obtain their livelihood from different sources. Firstly, most families have their own farm where they keep some animals like chicken, goats and incidentally pigs. Some have their own cows and horses as well, but these are not kept near the houses but on common pastures. Nearly all families have a private field near the house, varying from one to three hectares, where they cultivate cotton and sometimes crops like watermelon, beans and maize for their own consumption. The cultivation and ploughing of the private fields takes place with the help of two tractors which are the property of the co-operative. The Indian farmers, who are all *socios* (members of the co-operative), pay for using the tractors by working for the co-operative or by asking for an advance on the final payment for their crops. The



Map 7.2 Indian colony La Armonía

marketing of cotton is taken care of by the co-operative as well. The bulk of the produce is sold to the *Cooperativa Mennonita* in Loma Plata. In 1991, the Lengua of La Armonía produced 108,337 kilos of cotton on their private fields which they sold for approximately US $68,000 (ASCIM, 1992, p. 26).

Besides agriculture for themselves, most Indians take part in communal work on the large cotton fields and the cattle ranch. Work on these fields and on the ranch is organized by the Mennonite agronomist who also manages the finances. By working for the co-operative, the Indians can either build up an account which they spend on using one of the two tractors on their private fields, or obtain a cash income which is

paid directly after a day work. Most Indians prefer direct payment. Working for the co-operative is not an obligation but considered a welcome source of income by the Indians. One day of work provides them with the equivalent of some US $3, a payment which is calculated on the basis of the expected profits from the ranch and the harvest. At the end of the season, the final balance sheet is drawn up and the members of the co-operative obtain their share of the profit. If the total amount spent on wages exceeds the gross income of the co-operative, the next financial year will be started with a deficit.

Working as incidental labourers outside the settlement is a third source of income for the Lengua. *Changas* in fencing and clearing land or picking cotton can be obtained from Mennonite farmers and ranchers in the region. In comparison to some of the other Indian settlements of the ASCIM, however, paid labour is of minor economic significance in La Armonía. In January 1992, only a few Lengua said they left La Armonía for work occasionally. It appeared that work in the colony had their first priority.

The same goes for hunting, fishing and gathering which no longer are important sources of income for the Lengua in La Armonía. The Indians claim that they seldom leave the property and that there is nothing left to hunt, fish or gather since the land has been largely cleared and there are no fishing waters in the near vicinity.

The co-operative plays a principal role in the economy of the Indians in La Armonía since it provides credit, paid work, basic food supply, machinery for agriculture and marketing facilities for the produced goods. The co-operative system, however, which has been introduced in all Indian settlements accompanied by the ASCIM, is highly complex.

The basic idea that the co-operative is owned by its members who consequently share in its profits, are responsible for its possible losses and who may participate in its administration, is not entirely understood by most Indians. Many of them hold the view that the co-operative is run by the Mennonites and that the Mennonite advisor has full authority when it comes to taking crucial decisions. They do know that an *administrador* of the co-operative has been chosen from their midst, and they all have the greatest esteem for this person, but nevertheless they say that the highest position within the co-operative rests with the Mennonite. The principle of having debts or credit with the co-operative is not correctly understood either. Most Indians who obtain credit are not fully aware that this sum of money will be subtracted from their

final income at the end of the agricultural season. Many of them have problems with repaying debts. Working for the co-operative likewise leads to misunderstandings. The Indians do not consider working on the ranch or in the communal fields an investment in the co-operative as a whole, but seem to regard it as a common way of engaging in paid work for which they therefore want direct payment instead of a credit note. Putting aside money for the maintenance and depreciation of the tractors and other machinery, planning the time schedules of the tractors and the labour input on the communal fields, selecting cattle on the ranch and arranging trucks to come and pick up the animals, etcetera, are all tasks that would cause serious problems if the Mennonite *Wirtschafsberater* did not intervene.

The advanced and rather complex system of agricultural production, makes it quite unlikely that the Indian members of the co-operative will be able to take over the full administration in the near future. In fact, the Indians have become dependent upon others who help them to find their way in a system which they do not entirely understand.

The Mennonites have often been criticized for this way of working with the Indians. Hack (1976, p. 133) wrote in 1976: "The core of the dependency lies in the economic and technological preponderance of the Mennonites over the Indians, a dependency which in the future will probably increase rather than decrease" (translation by the author). Wallis (1985, p. 48) wrote that the Mennonites tend to impose Mennonite models of working on the Indian population in the settlements, which leads to Indian dependency. Members of the ENM hold the view that the Mennonite system currently implemented in the Indian colonies of ASCIM clashes with the social organization of the Indians and demands radical changes in Indian way of life, not only economically, but culturally as well (ENM, 1984, p. 183).

Employees of the ASCIM partly agree with these critics and the organization is continuously reconsidering its policy in such a way as to encourage Indian self-control and management. It is generally recognised, however, that ASCIM still has a long way to go in this respect.

Despite these critical remarks, the interviews among the Indians in La Armonía gave me the impression that the Lengua are very content with the current situation. They do not feel dependent on the Mennonites, nor are bothered by the fact that the Mennonite agronomist sometimes tells

them what to do. Instead, they showed great gratitude to the Mennonites who gave them land and taught them how to cultivate it.

The only concern that was mentioned several times is the lack of drinking-water in the colony. There is not sufficient capacity for storing rain-water and the *tajamares* that provide the drinking-water during most time of the year are dirty and sometimes dried out. The Indians said they hoped that this would be solved in the near future.

7.5 Land tenure in La Armonía

Most Lengua-Sur in La Armonía are aware of the fact that they are not themselves the owners of the 4,700 hectares of land on which the community has settled, but that the property belongs to the ASCIM. Inquiring after their opinion about this situation, however, I have come to the conclusion that the Indians do not consider this a problem nor an injustice, but that they regard their present position as safe and sound.

When the Lengua were asked whether they wanted to become the owners of the land and, if they had already undertaken action to achieve this, it appeared that many of them lacked a correct notion of the consequences that would result from their landownership. Among the ten Lengua interviewed, three held the view that if the Indian community obtained the title of the property, it would no longer be able to count on the support of the ASCIM. If, for instance, they wanted the Mennonite agronomist to stay in the colony and help them with agriculture, they would then have to pay his salary, and that, they claimed, was more than they could afford. Two others said that they did not want to own the land since they associated landownership with the obligation to pay taxes.[3] Starting from these notions, many Indians said they did not aspire to obtain the title of the land, but preferred keeping things as they were.

I also found incorrect opinions about the indigenist statute 904/81. When asked what the statute was about, one person said: "In the statute it is dictated that alcoholic drinks are not allowed in the colony". Even more remarkable was the statement: "The act says we are to stay here in the colony and work the land, which, as a matter of fact, is indeed what we want". Needless to say, there are no such statements made in the

[3] This notion, however, is false, since it is stated in article 64 of the statute 904/81 that Indian communities are exempted from paying taxes on earnings from land they own.

statute. Only the chosen leader of La Armonía and a few others expressed more or less correct opinions on the contents of the statute and the procedures for obtaining the title of the land.

It may be wondered where the Indians have picked up these ideas, and whether it is true that the ASCIM intends to withdraw its support to Indian communities as soon as these have become the owners of their lands. Beginning with the last question, the director of the ASCIM asserted that the support programme for Indian communities is by no means dependent upon the fact of whether or not the Indians own the land. He made it clear that: "If one of the Indian settlements obtains the title to its land and the Indians want us to keep on working as we do now, we'll of course respond to that. We might, however, decide to withdraw some of our personnel, but this could happen to all Indian settlements of the ASCIM since we have to reduce our expenditure on wages". Maybe the fear of the Lengua in La Armonía of losing the ASCIM's support is justified after all, since they do not want the Mennonite personnel to leave.

Seeking an explanation for the rather strange ideas that some Lengua have about the contents of statute 904/81, I have to assume that these notions are the result of efforts to keep the Indians in line with the ASCIM's policy. Intentionally or unintentionally, someone must have told the Indians that they had better not admit alcohol in the colony and should stick to the working in the fields instead of working outside La Armonía, since "that is what the law prescribes".

According to statute 904/81, the Lengua in La Armonía do not have sufficient land at their disposal since they have to share 4,700 hectares among 65 families. Recently, they mentioned this to the ASCIM and asked if an extension of their property would be possible. They suggested that purchasing the neighbouring property Laguna Millón, with an area of approximately 9,000 hectares, would solve their problems (see map 7.2). The ASCIM approved of the Lengua's proposal, and approached the owner of Laguna Millón with the intention of making a bid for the requested land.

The Anglican mission is also trying to obtain Laguna Millón. Some 1,100 Lengua, in all some 288 families, living south of La Armonía in El Estribo, have serious problems since they too lack sufficient land. In contrast to the Mennonites, *La Herencia*, the Anglican team of mission, did not try to buy the land, but started from the principle that the Paraguayan government is charged with the task of

handing over sufficient land to the indigenous communities. Furthermore, the team of *La Herencia* held the view that the property Laguna Millón was not being "rationally" exploited by its owner and could therefore be considered for expropriation.

At the end of 1990, *La Herencia* had already begun investigating whether it would be possible to obtain Laguna Millón in order to improve the situation for the Lengua in El Estribo. It contacted the INDI claiming that the government should start a procedure to expropriate the property and award it to the Lengua Indians in El Estribo (Chaco Boreal, 1991(1), p. 2). In April 1991, the INDI responded, after it had consulted the IBR, that expropriation was out of the question since the property was being "rationally" exploited. Furthermore, it responded that the owner of Laguna Millón had no intention of selling the land (Chaco Boreal, 1991(2), pp. 1-2).

In January 1992, the executive of the ASCIM claimed that the negotiations with the owner of Laguna Millón about buying the property for the Lengua in La Armonía were proceeding well. Apparently, the owner had changed his mind about selling the land, maybe he had been scared by the threat of loosing his land through expropriation. It seems highly likely that the Lengua of La Armonía will eventually obtain the 9,000 hectares of Laguna Millón.[4]

These events clearly illustrate that ASCIM as well as *La Herencia* pursue their own interests, where supporting the Indians living in their own projects has the highest priority. Instead of joining forces against those landowners who take advantage of the increasing land prices in the region and co-operating in those cases where the authorities do not recognise their responsibility towards the Indian people, ASCIM and *La Herencia* compete with each other for a single piece of land. Unfortunately, notwithstanding the fact that ASCIM and La Herencia both work for the benefit of the Indian people in the Paraguayan Chaco, they have still not been able to find a way of working together when it comes to purchasing land for the Indians. In other fields of activities, a co-operation between Mennonites and Anglicans is gradually beginning to take shape.

---

[4] One of the employees of the ASCIM suggested that the estate Laguna Millón, once purchased by the ASCIM, will not necessarily be placed exclusively at the disposition of the Lengua of La Armonía. The 9,000 hectares of land may also be split up between the two groups of Lengua.

7.6 Conclusion

In spite of the fact that Indian communities which have settled on the land of religious institutions have not obtained ownership of these lands, they feel safe with respect to land tenure. The missionary organizations usually purchased the land with the explicit goal of placing it at the disposal of the Indians, and therefore it may be assumed that these organizations do not intend to reverse this decision in the future. In fact, many religious organization that own Indian lands, claim to be making efforts to transfer these properties to the Indians themselves.

In this respect, however, results are disappointing. Only a few Indian communities have obtained the deeds to lands which formerly were the properties of religious institutions.[5] Two reasons seem to explain this slow progress. Firstly, I seriously doubt whether all religious institutions are really interested in handing over the properties, since in the given situation the Indians are indebted to the owners of the land. From a missionary point of view, this might be regarded as a "functional relationship". Also, and despite what is indicated by the indigenist land acts of Paraguay and Argentina, handing over land to Indian communities brings high costs for the institutions. Notary, land survey and administration costs may mount up considerably (see e.g. La Herencia, 1990, p. 5).

Secondly, and this may even be of greater importance, the Indians themselves seem only half interested in obtaining the land since they assume that their position is already secure. The Indians do not expect the religious institutions to evict them from their land and omit undertaking action to obtain ownership. As a result, most Indian communities living on the land of the religious organizations, have not even tried to obtain the legal status of *personería jurídica*.

The Mennonite settlement programme of the ASCIM is in many respects comparable with the work of other religious institutions in the Chaco. The Mennonites purchased land to allow Indian settlement and started an advanced aid programme to provide the Indian settlers with education, health care and economic support. The programme is the

[5] Makthlawaiya, a missionary station of the Anglican Church located in the Paraguayan *Chaco Bajo*, is one of the few exceptions in this respect. On the 7th of June 1991, the Lengua living in the mission became the owners of 3,737 hectares of land that had formerly belonged to the mission (ABC Color, 9-6-91, p. 30; Chaco Boreal, 1991(2), pp. 1-2).

largest and most far-reaching in the region.

The Lengua in La Armonía, as one of the twelve Indian communities that are supported by the ASCIM, enjoy a modern infrastructure for agricultural production. A well-developed co-operative system has increased the economic standing of the Indians in the project. Although the policy of the ASCIM has been criticized by several authors and specialists on the subject for its complexity which places the Indians in a dependent position in relation to the Mennonites, I heard no such complaints from the Indians themselves.

In spite of the fact that the Mennonites claim that they seek to transfer the landed properties to the Indians, I doubt whether this is actually their intention. The fact that many Indians in La Armonía had such unusual beliefs about the indigenist statute 904/81 and its implications might point to an - intended or unintended - Mennonite policy to keep the Indians from aspiring landownership. It seems to me that the Mennonites do not consider the time right for Indian independence in this respect. Apparently, they do not wish to risk the large amount of money that was invested in La Armonía, unless they can be sure that the Indians will continue exploiting the land as they do now. Therefore, their intention is to have the Indians guided by the ASCIM for a couple of years more, in order to improve the chances of self-government economically succeeding in the future. Whether this objective will be accomplished remains to be seen.

Since the Lengua in La Armonía do not seem to have a problem with the policy of the ASCIM, but on the contrary show great respect for the work of the Mennonites and feel secure in their present position, I have come to the conclusion that handing over the land to the Indians indeed has a low priority in this case. On the other hand, it seems as if the fact that the Mennonites still own the land, consolidates the dependency of the Indians upon the Mennonites. If the contact between Mennonites and Indians in the central part of the Paraguayan Chaco is to evolve into a more equal relationship, it will eventually be necessary to give the Indians full responsibility, both with regard to their economic activities and to landownership.

8. INDIVIDUAL ALLOTMENT OF INDIAN LANDS: THE TOBA OF BARRIO NAM QOM CLORINDA

8.1 Introduction

Indian landownership in the Gran Chaco is either vested in individual families or in communities. This chapter focuses on those Indian communities whose landownership is not registered in a communal property title for a single common area, but in several individual titles of family plots.

Most cases of individual allotment of Indian lands have taken place in the urban Indian settlements in the north-eastern part of the Argentine Chaco. Since the end of the 1950s, a considerable number of Indians have left their rural villages and headed for the cities and towns where they have settled in the outskirts. Recently, at the time that some of these urban communities were considered for landownership, the authorities or the Indians themselves choose to have the land allocated individually instead of communally. The consequences of individual allotment of land to Indian families will be elaborated on throughout the chapter.

Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda, located in the north-eastern part of the Argentine province of Formosa, is one of the urban Indian communities in the Gran Chaco that managed to obtain legal landownership by way of individual allotment.[1] In their quarter just outside town, some 130 Toba families in all occupy two hectares of land of which the property rights are set out in fifty individual titles. The Toba of Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda find themselves in a difficult position since the quarter is crowded and its population growing. Up till now, neither the *Instituto de Comunidades Aborígenes* (ICA) nor the municipality of Clorinda have

[1] A short period of fieldwork was carried out among the Toba of Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda in December 1991. Interviews were held with ten at randomly chosen Indian households and with several key-informants. In contrast to other fieldwork, the number of Indians that choose not to co-operate with the study was rather large (eight), possibly due to the fact that the Toba in Clorinda are somewhat reserved with outsiders in general. Other information used in this case study was derived from the municipality of Clorinda, the ICA in Formosa and newspaper archives.

responded to the Toba's request for more land. Shortly, legal procedures will be started to support their request.

8.2 Indian landownership adjudged to individuals

Traditional land tenancy among the Indian peoples of the Gran Chaco was based on communal rights of usufruct. Indian common law did not recognise an individual's right to claim land for himself and much less to part with the land in exchange for goods or money. Land was used in common and the community as a whole took care of its reallocation among the community members.

When in the 1980s, Paraguayan and Argentinean indigenist legislation was in preparation, it was emphasized that Indian common law relating to land tenancy should be incorporated in the statutes to come. The acts were to enable the Indian communities to own land on a communal basis. As I have shown in the preceding chapters, the possibility of Indian communal land ownership is indeed embedded in the present indigenist land acts.

In the Argentine acts, however, alongside Indian communal landownership, private landownership is also allowed. It is laid down in the provincial indigenist statutes that the transference of land to Indians may be directed towards both Indian communities and to Indian individuals, depending on the preference of the people involved (act of Chaco 3.258 art. 9; act of Salta 6.373 art. 15; act of Formosa 426 art. 12).

In resolution 304 (Poder Legislativo Formosa, 1985, p. 16), which regulates the implementation of the indigenist act of Formosa, it is dictated in article 12 that: "The Indian communities express their preference for private or communal landownership by way of voting in assembly, taking into account that a quorum of 60% of the people over eighteen is required. In case the community decides on landownership vested in individuals, the Indians who obtain land are entitled to the same services provided by the *Instituto de Comunidades Aborígenes* as Indian communities with communal property rights" (translation by the author).

The Paraguayan statute 904/81 does not include the possibility of allotting land to individual Indian families. According to article nineteen, however, it does allow Indian communities with communal titles to divide the land (unofficially) among their members, with the requirement

that family plots remain the property of the entire community in case the family involved no longer wishes to use the land.

Information provided by the Argentine indigenist institutions indicate that it is mainly the urban and semi-urban Indian communities that have preferred obtaining land individually. In Formosa for instance, the province of interest in this chapter, from 1985, the year that statute 426 was enacted, to the beginning of 1991, no less than 381 individual land titles were transferred to the Indian population.[2] Thirteen of these titles involved rural plots whereas the others involved land in urban or semi-urban areas. Of the ten urban Indian communities in the province of Formosa that obtained ownership of their land, five preferred to have the land allotted individually. Table 8.1 provides an overview of some aspects relating to these five urban Indian settlements.

Table 8.1 Individual land titles in urban Indian communities in the province of Formosa up to 1991

Community	Location	Number of titles	Hectares involved	People involved*	Date of transference
Barrio Lote 68	Formosa	153	69.4	765	16-10-1985
Barrio Nam Qom	Clorinda	50	2.0	250	11-04-1986
Barrio Mosconi	Gral. Mosconi	74	26.6	345	15-04-1987
Barrio San Martin	Ing. Juárez	5	7.2	27	20-04-1988
Barrio Viejo	Ing. Juárez	86	33.3	435	13-09-1990
Total		368	138.5	1822	

* Population of the areas at the time that the properties were transferred to the inhabitants.

(Instituto de las Comunidades Aborígenes, 1991)

[2] In comparison to the provinces of Chaco and Salta, the province of Formosa is rather successful in its efforts to transfer property to the Indian population. This might be explained by the fact that the indigenist institution of Formosa (ICA) has a larger budget to spend than its counterparts in Salta and Chaco. Provincial statute 560 prescribes that 50% of the profits from oil exploitation in Formosa go to the provincial authorities, 40% are to be spent on economic development in the three western departments where the actual exploitation is taking place, and 10% of the profits is added to the budget of Formosa's indigenist institution, ICA. The financial strength of the ICA increases its effectiveness (Acción, 1988(215), pp. 6-7).

It may be wondered why it is mainly the urban and semi-urban Indian communities that opt for individual landownership.

Firstly, the population of the Indian quarters is not homogenous in the sense that the Indians do not share a common background and culture and that they are not bound by relations of kinship. Indian quarters come into existence as a result of successive movements of migration bringing Indians from different regions and communities to live together in a small urban area (see e.g. Bartolomé, 1971, p. 81). Obviously, since the coherence within the new urban community is not as strong as in some rural communities, the people often prefer to have their own piece of land instead of sharing it with their neighbours. It is not unusual that the urban Indian communities are troubled by internal conflicts, for instance because two clans of Indians settle in the quarter and argue about political matters. The fact that various religious movements of different character often start their activities in the quarters among the Indians, likewise frequently leads to quarrels and conflicts (Miller, 1979, p. 161).

Secondly, the economic and social position of the Indians in the urban quarters is marginal. The dream of finding well-paid employment in the city seldom materializes and they end up living in the *villas miserias*, the slums in the fringe areas of town. Also, they often meet discrimination from the non-Indian population from the rich parts of town (see e.g. Bartolomé, 1972, pp. 227-8; Heredia, 1978). Confronted with the economic success of the urban *Criollos*, the Indians often try to adopt the "white way of life" hoping that prosperity will come to them as well. Individualism seems to be one of the customs that the Indians copy from the "whites" (Hoek, 1990, pp. 50-1). Besides, it may be assumed that the people who leave the interior and the socio-economic practices that go with life in rural communities, are also more inclined to break with the tradition of communal land tenancy.

Many authors who focus on land ownership programmes for indigenous peoples give preference to communal conferment rather than to individual allotment. Beauclerk et al. (1988, p. 64) for instance write: "The vesting of legal rights in individuals rather than communities is a serious threat to indigenous peoples, and should be accepted only in the last resort when a group is virtually landless and homeless". Long before, the International Labour Office (1953, p. 295) wrote that: "Individualisation of land titles proved disastrous to numerous Indian communities. In some countries the recognition of such titles involved a

positive procedure of acquisition by application for a special award - a rather meaningless procedure to a people to whom the idea of private landownership was foreign". Ramos (1984, p. 94), who refers to land ownership programmes with respect to the Amazonian lowland Indians in Brazil, writes: "The emancipation decree (promulgated by the Brazilian government in the late 1970s) can be seen as an attempt on the part of the authorities to liberate Indian lands by terminating the wardship of the Indians. With emancipation, ownership of the land would be transferred from the Union to the Indians themselves in the form of individual titles. Because such measures have historical precedents elsewhere in the New World, we may surmise their probable outcome. The Indians would soon be relieved of their newly acquired property by pressures put upon them by non-Indians". Von Bremen (1987, p. 27), who refers to the private land titles handed over to Toba Indians in Formosa, writes; "Apparently, the land has been allotted in individual parcels for each family, which raises the risk of loosing the land to 'third parties' because the community is not the legal owner" (translation by the author).

In short, individual allotment of land to indigenous peoples makes ownership somewhat vulnerable. Individual titles hold the risk that Indian landholders will loose the land, either through sale or as a result of confiscation by money lenders to whom the land was given in security. Next to this, individual allotment of land to indigenous families will cause serious problems if the population of the community increases and more families request a piece of land for themselves. Finally, individual allotment of land is in contravention of Indian common law in which land was not considered personal property. It may be assumed that breaking with tradition in this respect, will give rise to social and cultural changes and maybe to conflicts within the Indian communities.

Whether these difficulties resulting from individual allotment of land are also relevant for the Argentine Indians that settled in the urban quarters, will be discussed in the following sections.

8.3 The Toba of Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda

The small town of Clorinda is located in the most north-eastern corner of the Argentine province of Formosa. With its 40,000 inhabitants, Clorinda is the second largest settlement of the province and the capital of the department of Pilcomayo. Clorinda is located on the bank of the

Paraguay river beyond Asunción, while to the north the municipality extends as far as the Pilcomayo river.

Barrio Nam Qom, the Indian quarter, is situated in the southern part of the town at a distance of some two kilometres or some twenty blocks from Clorinda's main street San Martín. The quarter includes two blocks, locally known as the *manzanas* or the *cuadras* 417 and 418, of 10,000 square metres each, and is presently inhabited by some 130 Toba families. Since 1986, the Toba Indians of Barrio Nam Qom own these two *manzanas*. The fifty Indian families that in 1986 lived in Clorinda, obtained individual property titles to small yards of some 250 square metres.

Toba Indians settled not only in Clorinda but went to many other cities as well. Nowadays, there are at least fifteen urban or semi-urban Toba quarters in northern Argentina. The oldest urban Toba settlement is Barrio Toba of Resistencia in the Argentine province of Chaco. The Indian quarter in Resistencia was established at the end of the 1940s when the first Toba from the interior arrived in the provincial capital and settled in its outskirts. Nowadays, the quarter is inhabited by approximately 2,000 Toba who live in small, brick houses built by the municipality (Bünstorf, 1985, p 10-6). In other towns in the Chaco region, like Formosa, Castelli, Barranqueras and Roque Saenz Peña, Toba settlements arose in the late 1950s. Some Toba also left their traditional territory, which covered almost the entire eastern part of the Chaco, and went to large cities like Santa Fé, Rosario and even Buenos Aires (Magrassi, 1989, p. 95).

The growth of urban Indian settlements from the late 1950s onwards was mainly the result of deteriorating living conditions in the eastern Chaco. In the 1930s, the extended Toba territory was largely occupied by cotton farmers from outside the region. Since the hunting and gathering activities of the Toba were being disturbed by agrarian colonization, many of them engaged in paid work on the farms. When, however, cotton production in the region decreased drastically in the 1950s, opportunities for finding work collapsed and many Indians went to the cities in search of work (Bartolomé, 1972, p. 228; Bünstorf, 1980, p. 332).

When the Toba arrived in the cities, they settled in the outskirts among other urban poor. After some time, however, the Toba population became segregated in quarters exclusively inhabited by Indians. In some cases, municipal authorities or non-governmental organizations interfered

in the establishment of Indian quarters by providing basic facilities like electricity, water supply, schools and medical clinics. In general, the Indians in the towns are among the poorest strata of the urban population, depending on incidental jobs, begging and prostitution. Some produce some kind of *artesanía*, handiwork, which they try to sell, but unfortunately, prices tend to be low (see e.g. von Bremen, 1987, p. 25; Bünstorf, 1985, p. 15).

Toba Indians coming from the agricultural colony Primavera and from other small villages nearby like Palma Sola, Tacaaglé and Laguna Blanca, began arriving in Clorinda at the beginning of the 1960s. At first, they settled in the triangle between the international route 11 which leads from Asunción to Resistencia and national route 86 which goes westwards to El Espinillo on a piece of land which was known as *Lote Once* (Plot Eleven). In 1968, however, the authorities of Clorinda had developed other plans for "Plot Eleven", and the Toba were evicted. As soon as the Indians had left the plot, the construction of a residential area for well-off people and a modern college was started.

The Toba settled in southern Clorinda where at that time urbanization was yet to begin. They cleared a piece of land and built provisional houses with leftover material. The land was the property of a large landholder who did not seem to care that the Indians squatted on his land. In 1970, the landowner even decided to transfer the land to the Toba Indians, who obtained the property rights in 1986.[3]

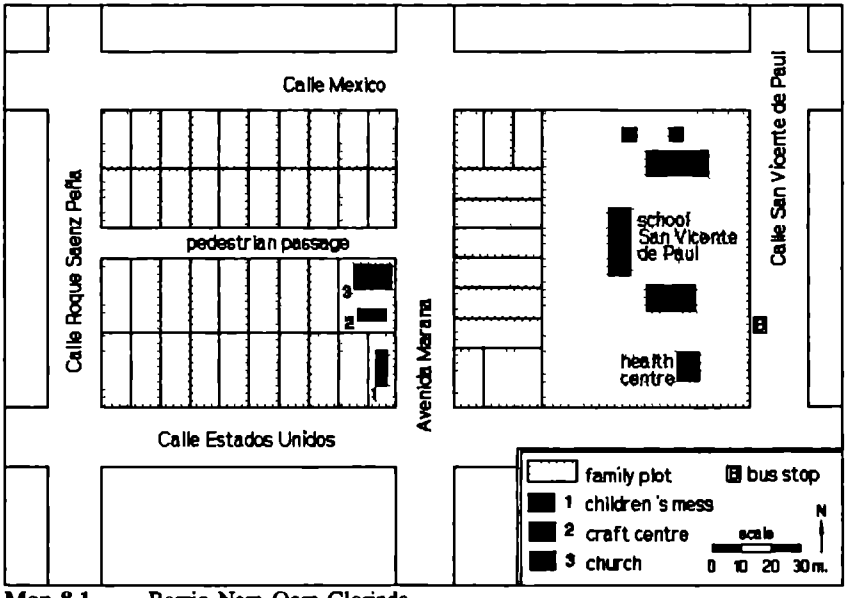
In 1982, the municipality of Clorinda started a housing programme, *El Plan de Auto-Construcción de Vivienda*, aimed at the construction of fifty houses for and by the Toba. Supported by funds from the federal government, the municipal authorities provided the Indians with material for building the houses and sent experts to co-ordinate the construction. Thirty brick houses with corrugated iron roofs were built but never finished, now they still have no doors, windows or windowframes. The construction of the twenty remaining houses was even never started because the financial input came to a stop.

Other facilities were established in the years that followed. As a result of the housing programme, water pipes and electricity were installed in the quarter. A large primary school, called San Vicente de Paul, was constructed on an area of 5,600 square meters on block 418.

[3] More detailed information about Indian land tenure in Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda will be given in the next section.

The school was established to provide the Toba children with decent education, but in the course of time, more and more non-Indian children from Clorinda started going to San Vicente de Paul. A bus stop was placed in front of the school and nowadays, approximately half of the students come from other parts of Clorinda. On block 417, a mess was built to provide the Indian students with a free meal at lunchtime.

Beside the school is the *Sala de Primeros Auxilios Madrassi*, a small medical centre built with money gathered by Clorinda's Lions Club. The Indians from the quarter can have free consultations. The main concern of the centre is the control of tuberculosis and syphilis in Barrio Nam Qom (La Mañana, 20-5-1988).



Map 8.1 Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda

Nearly all Toba families in Barrio Nam Qom acquire a substantial part of their income from work as incidental labourers. Because Clorinda is a frontier town and always busy with transport activities, the Indians can easily find work in loading and unloading trucks and in warehouses. Some Toba always work for the same employer, but the majority take whatever work they can get. Most Indians who engage in loading and unloading trucks work on piece rates. Usually, a group of some 20 men work together and get paid some US $50 for one truck. Given the fact

that a worker cannot shift more than two loads in a full days work, the maximum income obtained from *changas* in town averages US $5 a day.

Working for the municipality is another source of income for the Toba. In the early 1980s, the authorities hoped to create employment in the Indian quarter itself, but when this plan failed it was decided that the Indians should be considered for jobs in the public sector. Today, some ten Toba regularly work for the municipality, one as a porter in the school, one as a nurse in the health centre and the others as cleaners of public properties or as road workers.

Until recently, expectations with respects to the marketability of Indian handiwork was high in Barrio Nam Qom and many Indian families applied themselves to the production of wood carvings, ceramics and bags. The Indian artisans even constructed a *Sala de Artesanía*, a craft centre, where they worked together and exhibited their merchandise. Sales figures, however, fell short of expectations. Incidental customers from Asunción or Formosa visit Barrio Nam Qom and buy some of the goods, but the earnings are rather disappointing. Nowadays, the craft centre is closed most of the time.

Since there is no free land available for the Toba in Barrio Nam Qom, the Indians cannot engage in agriculture or raise livestock near their settlement. Some families keep a few chicken round the house, but keeping larger animals would be a nuisance to everyone. The Indians, however, have maintained intensive contacts with Toba communities in rural areas, especially with the people in Primavera and Tacaaglé. When the time is right for picking cotton, many Toba from Clorinda leave Barrio Nam Qom for two or three months and visit their relatives in the interior in order to help with harvesting.

The same goes for hunting game and gathering wildfood which is hardly possible in the intensively occupied region near Clorinda where game has become scarce and landowners prohibit trespassing on their private property. When the Toba stay with their relatives in the interior, however, they like to go out hunting and gathering. Some people from Barrio Nam Qom do go fishing once in a while in the Pilcomayo river which is nearby.

Miller (1979, p. 162), who wrote an excellent study about the cultural changes that took place in Toba society, summarizes their economic position as follows: "The (urban) Toba are caught between two worlds. They have not entirely broken with their old economic base, nor have they been able to adapt themselves completely to the new one" (translation by the author).

The Toba in Barrio Nam Qom have established a civil association to look after their interests. The association is known as the *Comisión Vecinal*, the neighbourhood commission, and was granted legal recognition by the provincial authorities of Formosa in 1985. The neighbourhood commission is run by an annually chosen president and secretary.

When the commission was installed in 1982, its main task was the co-ordination of the housing programme, for which, according to the inhabitants of the quarter, it served well. It took care of the construction of the houses and requested the municipality to install the electricity and water supplies. The commission also put great effort into the legal procedures concerning Indian landownership in the quarter. After the housing programme had come to an end and the land had been obtained, however, the commission lost a substantial part of its rationale.

The current president of the neighbourhood commission takes the view that there are still a few important tasks to which the commission should dedicate its attention. He said: "It is important that we maintain friendly contacts with the municipality. Next to that, we aim to improve the infrastructure in the quarter, and try to take care of all matters that involve the Toba here in Clorinda". It was asserted by many people in Barrio Toba, however, that lately the commission has not been functioning too well. One Toba said: "I believe the commission still exists, although I never hear anything about it". Another said: "I don't know what the commission is doing at the moment, they hardly ever call meetings as they used to do in the past. I overheard they are going to the municipality to ask for sugar bread to celebrate Christmas and cider for New Year's Eve". It seems that the neighbourhood commission in Barrio Nam Qom is not very active at the moment, although its president is still held in high regard because of his position.

Also held in high esteem are the religious leaders of the community. Many people in the quarter visit the *Iglesia Evangélica Unida* (IEU) that had a large church constructed on block 417. The IEU is considered an indigenous and independent religious movement of the Toba Indians and is the most popular Church among the Toba in Clorinda (Wright, 1988). A few years ago, a Toba clergyman of the Pentecostal faith settled in Barrio Nam Qom. He started preaching and managed to get a handful of followers on his side. Catholics are also trying to make an entrance into the Toba community. They built a small chapel near the quarter which is regularly visited by some Toba. Now and then, people of the ENDEPA, the Catholic missionary movement of

northern Argentina, pay visits to the Toba in Clorinda (see e.g DIM, 1992(42), p.17-9).

8.4 Land tenure in Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda

Barrio Nam Qom covers an area of two hectares of land. Since 0.7 hectares are taken by the school and the medical centre, only 1.3 hectares remain for actual use by the Toba. With such a small area of land at their disposal, it is not surprising that the Toba hold the view that the quarter is overcrowded. In this section, I will first give a chronological overview of the procedures that resulted in the Toba's landownership in Clorinda. After that, I will pay attention to the problem of overcrowding in the Indian quarter and investigate the possibility of extending the property. Finally, I will take a closer look at the consequences of individual allotment of land to Indian families in comparison to communal Indian landownership.

After the Toba had been expelled from *Lote Once*, a piece of public land alongside one of the main roads in north-eastern Formosa, they settled in south Clorinda on private property. The land on which the Toba settled was the property of the rich Hertelendy family. In former days, the Hertelendy's had owned 80,000 hectares of land in north-east Formosa. With the foundation of Clorinda, they gave away large tracts of land to the newly established municipality, and sold land to private building companies. Today, the Hertelendy's are still regarded as the founders of the city of Clorinda.

The Toba in Barrio Nam Qom claim that the father of their present leader was a close friend of the old Hertelendy who had been involved in the foundation of the city. The assumed friendship between this Toba chief and Hertelendy explains why one of the sons of the old Hertelendy decided to give a piece of land to the Toba Indians once they had settled on his land in southern Clorinda. In 1970, two years after the Toba had been evicted from their initial settlement in Clorinda, provincial decree 2.319 affirmed that the Hertelendy's had handed over two hectares of land to the provincial authorities with the explicit intention of having this land transferred to the Indian people who lived on it. As a result of the decree, the private property occupied by the Toba became provincial property. In the following eleven years, the provincial authorities did not undertake any action to have the land

actually transferred to the Indians.

In 1981, the provincial government of Formosa ordered that the two hectares of land be measured out and registered, which was actually done on November 19th. As *manzanas* 417 and 418, the 20,000 square metres were incorporated into the register of the *Dirección de Catastro*. Since, however, the provincial property was located inside municipal boundaries, the province was not authorized to transfer the two blocks of land directly to the Indians without having it first handed over officially to the local authorities of Clorinda. Therefore, on July 14th, 1982, provincial decree 1.188 stated that the province was to cede the property to the municipality in order to have it transferred to its Indian occupiers. By that time, the Toba had become impatient and the neighbourhood commission began sending letters to the provincial authorities asking for a rapid completion of the legal procedures.

On August 21th, 1984, the municipality of Clorinda did indeed receive the deeds of the two hectares of land. Thereupon, public employers of the municipality and of the ICA approached the Toba asking whether they wanted the land to be transferred to them individually or communally. The Toba were to vote for one of these options, but since the family plots had already been measured out during the housing programme, the most logical choice was to opt for individual titles. On January 23th, 1985, the provincial government of Formosa enacted statute 501 in which it was laid down that the provincial notary should hand over the titles of the blocks 417 and 418 in Clorinda, to the Indian people living on this land. The statute also prescribed that all costs of transference would be charged to the provincial government. Finally, on April 11th, 1986, the mayor of Clorinda handed over the fifty titles (La Mañana, 11-4-1986, p. 21).[4]

Taking a glance at the timetable of the procedures followed, one cannot help noticing the high degree of bureaucracy involved when it comes to handing over property to Indian people. Eighteen years after the landowners expressed their willingness to part with the land in favour of the Toba, the transference took actually place.

Over the past few years, the population of Barrio Nam Qom has increased substantially. In the beginning of the 1980s, the number of Indian families in the quarter amounted to some fifty, whereas the total

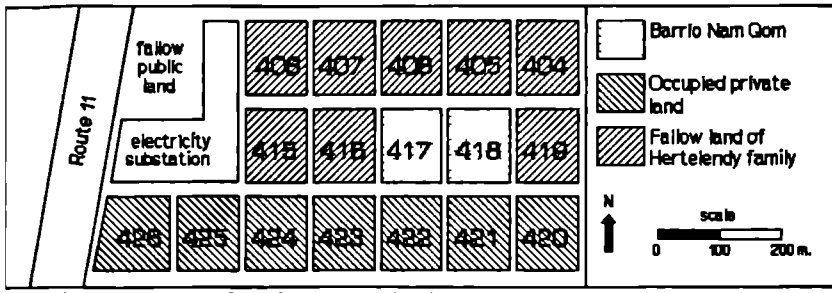
[4] Most of this information was obtained from the archives of the *Instituto de las Comunidades Aborígenes* in Formosa.

population numbered some 250 people. At the end of 1991, however, the quarter was inhabited by approximately 130 families, in all some 650 people. This growth of population was due to the arrival of Toba from other communities in the interior who settled in the quarter, and to natural growth.

Given the fact that there is only room for fifty Indian families because the land has been divided into fifty plots, some eighty families have no land of their own. Presently walking through Barrio Nam Qom, one notices that most plots are occupied by two, sometimes even three houses. Recently married couples and families that have newly arrived in Clorinda had no other choice than to build a house on someone else's land, mostly of their parents or relatives. Since the plots measure only ten by twenty or twenty five metres each, the houses are actually packed together like sardines. For some thirty Toba families, there was no room left in the quarter itself, and they have illegally built provisional houses outside the quarter on land owned by private landholders. Most of these families live on the blocks 405 and 416 (see map 8.2).

That land shortage is indeed one of the most serious problems confronting the Toba in Clorinda, was clearly affirmed by the interviews. One Toba said: "The quarter has become too small for us. We need more land for our children and our children's children. My son, for instance, is married and has two children, but he lives over there, on my land, that is not correct is it?". Someone else added: "Families from Primavera and other communities keep coming to us, but we have no land for them so they settle over there, outside our two *manzanas*. They stay there without a title. When we were on *Lote Once*, we had no land title and they threw us off just like that".

The Toba hold the view that the current shortage of land would be solved if two blocks more were to be adjudged to them. They have set their sights on blocks 415 and 416, two adjoining blocks on the west side of the quarter. Again, the requested land is the property of the Hertelendy family. The land lies largely fallow, apart from some *Criollo* and Indian families who illegally squat on the land, and the Indians speculate that since the Hertelendy's are not actually using the land but are liable to pay taxes for it, they would probably be glad to part with it. Given the fact that the Hertelendy's have already proved their commitment to the Indian population on an earlier occasion, the Toba hope that they will be willing to give them the solicited land.



Map 8.2 Barrio Nam Qom and adjoining blocks

The municipal authorities of Clorinda recognise the fact that Barrio Nam Qom is overcrowded and that the possibility of extending the Toba's property should be investigated. On the other hand they allege not to have a budget large enough to solve the Toba's problems by purchasing the land. They say they have considered giving the Indians a piece of unused, public land situated alongside an electricity substation near the Indian quarter, but since this land is inconvenient and perhaps even dangerous, the proposal has been withdrawn. The municipal authorities affirm that the Toba have submitted a request for two more blocks, and that this request refers to the blocks 415 and 416, owned by the Hertelendy family.

The Toba have made their petition concerning the two blocks directly to the Hertelendy family hoping that they will be prepared to hand over the two hectares of land. Until now, however, they have not received a reaction of the landowners, and it is uncertain whether or not they are willing to grant the request, especially since the prices of land in the area have gone up.[5] But supposing that the Hertelendy's are willing to give away the requested land, it seems unlikely that the matter can be settled by the Indians and the Hertelendy's without the interference of Formosa's indigenist institution and the municipality of Clorinda. Far more likely is that a long, bureaucratic procedure will be started in order to ratify the transference of the land. Given the fact that in December 1991, the directors of the ICA had not even been informed about the actions undertaken by the Toba of Clorinda, it may be safely assumed that in the case where the Hertelendy's are willing to give the

[5] Since there is no legal ground in the indigenist act of Formosa, statute 426, for having unexploited, private properties expropriated in favour of Indian communities, it entirely depends on the owners willingness to part with the land.

land to the Indians, it will still take a long time for the matter to be settled.

What remains to be answered is the question why the Toba in Clorinda choose to have the land allotted to them individually instead of communally, and what consequences follow from this choice.

Firstly, the Toba seem remarkably well informed about the indigenist legislation of the province. Nine of the ten interviewed had heard of the enactment of the indigenist statute 426 in 1984, and six were able to give a full explanation of the relevance and contents of the act. Most Toba were acquainted with the fact that the indigenist statute offers two alternatives for having land transferred to the Indian communities; individual transference and communal transference.

Inquiring after the motives that made the Toba decide to opt for individual landownership, divergent views came forward. Five of ten Toba interviewed said that they had no idea how this choice had been made. They could not remember having voted for it, nor having been asked to express their preference in this respect. They claimed that the municipality had made the decision without consulting them. The other five said they had wanted the land to be awarded individually since that had seemed more in accordance with city customs to which they wanted to adapt themselves. One spoke out clearly, saying that: "We are not in the *campo* here so we can't own land as a community. Everybody in town has an individual piece of land and we have to behave as everybody else does". Another said: "We got the impression that the municipality wanted us to choose for individual allotment, so that's what we did".

Although it seems that the Toba's choice for individual landownership did not follow from a careful consideration of the advantages and disadvantages, many of them hold the view that they have made the right decision. "Of course it is better this way because now I know what is mine and I know what belongs to others". "With everybody having his own plot, you don't have to get involved with the others if you don't want to". "This is my land, and if something might happen to me, my children will not stay behind without means of support for at least they will have my land". Only a few Toba have their doubts concerning the individual land tenancy. "I would prefer having one piece of land for us all, but of course it would have to be an extensive area". "I wonder if it would not have been better to ask for communal land. Nowadays, the people who come from the interior and

want to settle in the quarter can have no place of their own, and that is not right".

Taking a closer look at the consequences of individual landownership in Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda, three aspects come to fore.

Firstly, the population of the quarter, as is the case in most Indian communities in the Gran Chaco, is instable due to migration, natural growth and the search for temporary wage labour. Land tenancy vested in individuals rather than in communities, however, causes the tenure situation to become static rather than dynamic. As a consequence, the Toba in Clorinda cannot respond adequately to the arrival of new families.

Present-day land tenancy in Barrio Nam Qom also has important legal implications. The risk of loosing the land through sale or as a result of confiscation by money lenders, as was mentioned in section two as the main objection to individual ownership programmes among indigenous peoples, does not apply to the Toba in Clorinda. It is stated in the indigenist statute 426 of Formosa, article 12, that Indian lands can never be sold nor used as a security for obtaining credit. This refers to both communal lands and individual lands. But what happens if an Indian landholder in Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda dies or abandons his land? According to article 14 of statute 426: "The community has the right to grant its members plots of land for individual use. In case these plots are abandoned, the community cancels the concession and reassigns the plot". This, however, refers to communal lands that are divided by and among the community members and not to individual landowners. In other words, there is a gap in statute 426, as a matter of fact in the entire indigenist legislation of both Paraguay and Argentina, when it comes to determining the future application of abandoned individual Indian plots. In practise, the Toba in Clorinda solve the problem by handing over abandoned plots of land to the children, relatives or friends of the legal landowner. These new occupiers consider themselves to be the legal owners of the land although the title is not in their name. Eventually, when most plots will have passed from hand to hand, the titles will have lost a substantial part of their legal value because the names of the assumed owners no longer correspond with the names registered in the titles.

Finally, individual titles of property, as have been handed out to the Toba in Clorinda, contravene Indian common law in which land was not considered personal property but a resource to be used communally. It may be expected that vesting landownership in individual families will

speed up the process of integration or adaptation. Whether this should be regarded as a positive or as a negative development, remains to be seen but of course depends primarily on the ambitions of the Indians themselves.

8.5 Conclusion

Although the Toba in Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda do find themselves in a somewhat privileged position since they, in contrast to many other Indian communities in the Gran Chaco, have been able to obtain ownership of a piece of land, it has been illustrated in the preceding sections that the area available in Barrio Nam Qom is far too small. Nowadays, some 650 Toba Indians have barely 1.3 hectares of land at their disposal and the community is still growing. The Indians are currently trying to get hold of more land in order to solve the problem of overpopulation in the quarter. For the time being, however, any progress in this respect is still out of sight. The case study of the Toba in Clorinda thus clearly reveals a gap in Argentine indigenist legislation in which no attention has been paid to the minimum area of land that should be transferred to each Indian family. Paraguayan legislation is more advanced in this respect, and indicates that each Indian family living in rural parts of the Gran Chaco is entitled to receive a minimum of a hundred hectares of land (act 904/81, art. 18).

Instead of obtaining a communal title for one piece of land to be used communally, the Toba in Clorinda chose, like in fact many other Indian groups living in the Argentine Gran Chaco in urban and semi-urban areas, to have the land allotted to them on an individual basis. To explain why mainly the urban and semi-urban communities opted for individual landownership, I assume that internal social cohesiveness in these urban quarters is not as strong as is the case in the rural communities. The fact that the urban communities came into existence as a result of successive migrations and that the Indians do not share a common background, may point to an absence of strong community ties. Furthermore, frequently occurring conflicts and the often extreme poverty in these urban Indian quarters has resulted in a more individual orientation. The case study of the Toba in Clorinda did indicate, however, that we should be careful not to regard these Indian quarters near the cities in the region as exclusively urban communities. Despite the fact that these Indians obtained a piece of land and have built a

house in the city, they do maintain rather intensive contacts of both economic and social character with their relatives in rural areas.

In reviewing Indian land tenure in the manner presented in the chapter, I come to the following conclusions. Individual titling is preferred by - or occasionally imposed upon - Indian communities that keep close contacts with non-Indian people and may be an expression of their efforts to adapt themselves to the non-Indian way of life in which individual property and family life take a central position. Individual titles do, however, make it difficult for the community to cope with an increasing number of inhabitants and, besides, are not compatible with Indian customs like migration and the sharing of resources. From a legal point of view, provisions have to be made concerning the reassignment of abandoned plots as well as concerning the possibility of having the number of individual titles and/or area granted to an Indian community extended in the case where the population of the community is growing.

In spite of these critical remarks we have to bear in mind that land titles, be they individually or communally granted, do provide the Indians with the best possible security against loosing control over their land, the fate that seems to threat all Indian people in the Gran Chaco.

9. INDIAN COMMUNITIES WITH COMMUNAL LAND TITLES: THE CHAMACOCO OF PUERTO DIANA

9.1 Introduction

Nearly all Indian communities in the Gran Chaco have either been deprived of their land and resources or presently face the threat of loosing access to the areas in which they used to live undisturbed and independently. As I have shown in the preceding chapters, however, present-day indigenist legislation in Paraguay and Argentina enables the Indian people to obtain ownership of land. Acquiring legally recognised landownership is the only way for Indian people to secure their lands against the occupation and purchase by outsiders. Individual titling of Indian land was discussed in chapter eight, and here I will focus on those Indian communities that have managed to secure their land by way of communal titles.

The first part of the chapter is devoted to a general overview of Indian communal landownership in the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco. Since the legal procedures concerning Indian communal landownership have been elaborated on rather extensively in section 3.3, they will not be repeated here.

The Chamacoco Indians in Puerto Diana in the north-eastern part of the Paraguayan Chaco provide us with a clear example of an Indian community that holds its land communally. In the third section I will discuss some of the main characteristics of this Chamacoco community and give a short historical background. Then I will describe the modes of subsistence and leadership within the community and touch on the contacts that have been established between the Chamacoco and the missionaries of the New Tribes Mission. Land tenure in Puerto Diana is the subject of the fourth section in which attention is paid to the legal procedures that in 1987 eventually resulted in the IBR's decision to transfer 2,345 hectares of land to the Chamacoco. Other subjects raised in this section are the quality of the land that the Chamacoco of Puerto Diana have at their disposal and the Indian's opinion with regard to their landownership. It will be demonstrated that the Chamacoco in Puerto Diana face a number of problems that are directly related to their

property. The chapter concludes with a brief summary and some general observations relating to communal titles for Indian communities.[1]

9.2 Indian landownership adjudged to communities

The 1980s saw an important step forward in indigenist legislation in both Paraguay and Argentina. National and provincial acts promulgated in this decade have given way to legal transference of public property to Indian communities. From a legal point of view, the recognition of Indian common use and ownership of land might be considered a radical change with regard to the past.

The recognition of Indian communal landownership should be valued for various reasons. Firstly, legal titles of land offer the indigenous people the best possible security of tenure. No matter what developments may take place in the Gran Chaco region when it comes to agricultural colonization, oil exploitation or the extension of livestock ranching, indigenous groups with legal titles have secured their future access to land and resources. Landownership vested in the community rather than in individual community members, moreover, tends to create a somewhat flexible tenure situation which seems to fit more easily to Indian customs like occasional migration and staying with relatives in other communities for certain periods of the year. Additionally, the legal recognition of indigenous people's rights to claim land, means an important step forward in the process of their social and legal emancipation. Communities are acknowledged as the crux of traditional indigenous organization and are considered for legal recognition as such.

Despite the importance of adequate and useful indigenist legislation, we should be careful not to put too much value in acts, decrees and statutes. Legislation at best reflects the official opinion and policy towards the Indians, but in no way guarantees that the positive intentions will also be actually carried out. In many cases, authorities restrict themselves to enacting decrees and statutes without paying much attention to the observance of their measures. In fact, problems are often considered solved as soon as legal action has been undertaken.

---

[1] A short period of fieldwork was carried out among the Chamacoco in Puerto Diana in October 1991. Again, interviews were held with ten Indian households and with several key-informants. Additional data was obtained from the INDI, the IBR, the New Tribes Mission, the SPSAJ and from newspaper archives.

The actual results of the indigenist legislation promulgated in the 1980s are reflected in table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Communal land titles granted to Indian communities in the Gran Chaco up to 1991

	Paraguayan Chaco	Argentinean provinces of Chaco	Formosa	Salta	Total
Total number of Indian communities	96	81	99	101	377
Indian communities with communal land titles*	13	0	65	0	78
Area of communal land involved (ha)*	94,687	0	206,012	0	300,699

* The figures include grants until mid-1991 and are based on personal information obtained from the indigenist institutions, newspaper archives and the following sources:
(CEC, 1989, p. 25; Chase-Sardi et al. ,1990; IDACH, 1990)

The figures indicate that the Paraguayan government and the provincial government of Formosa have both been responsive to the Indian's request for land, although in Paraguay the number of Indian communities that has been granted communal landownership is rather small compared with Formosa. In the Argentine provinces of Chaco and Salta, however, not a single community has obtained a definitive communal title. Some groups did acquire provisional titles, but none of these have been definitively formalized.[2]

As mentioned in section 3.4 where the concept of spatial marginalization was explained, providing Indian people with land involves more than tenureship alone. Apart from the number of Indian communities that over the past few years have been granted legal communal landownership, the effectiveness of present-day indigenist legislation should therefore also be evaluated by paying attention to other variables

[2] In both Chaco and Salta, Indian people have been considered for landownership, but only on an individual basis. Provisional and individual titles have been omitted from table 9.1.

that are strongly linked to Indian landownership.

Of principal importance is the area of land that the Indians obtain. A communal title is of hardly any value when the area concerned is too small to guarantee economic subsistence. Next to the area, attention should be paid to the quality and the accessibility of the land. Obviously, area, quality and accessibility will have to be examined by starting from the current modes of production applied by the Indian community involved. Finally, Indian lands are better secured against illegal occupancy by outsiders when the properties are demarcated by fences or at least poles. With these considerations in mind, I will now analyze the present situation of the Chamacoco.

9.3 The Chamacoco in Puerto Diana

The Chamacoco Indians all live near to the Paraguay river in the northern Paraguayan department of Alto Paraguay (see map 1.1). The approximately 1,000 Chamacoco that today live in this region, are split into five communities. Three of these, known as the communities Önhichta, Wohtuta and Pechiuta, live near to each other on a large area of land called Puerto Esperanza. Another Chamacoco community, called Ylyhurrta, has settled in Buena Vista near Fuerte Olimpo and the fifth, the one I pay attention to in this chapter, is called Puerto Diana and is situated on the right bank of the Paraguay river, some 880 kilometres north of Asunción (Chase-Sardi et al., 1990, pp. 50-64).

The Chamacoco belong to the linguistic group of the Zamuco and are linguistically related to the Moro or Ayoreo Indians who, like the Chamacoco, dwell in the north-eastern part of Paraguay's Chaco region. According to various authors, the Chamacoco, who refer to themselves as "Öshöro" or "Ishír", meaning "People", are divided into three subgroups: the Hório, the Ebidoso and the Tumerehá. The Hório originally lived in the region of Bahía Negra and Puerto Mihanovich on the Paraguay river, the Ebidoso resided in the vicinity of Puerto Voluntad and the habitat of the Tumerehá was north of Puerto Sastre. Nowadays, these three groups increasingly mix with each other (Baldus, 1931, pp. 10-1; Cordeu, 1989a, p. 548; INDI, 1985b, p. 25; Métraux, 1946, p. 244).

In earlier days, up to about the end of the 18th century, the Chamacoco seem to have lived in the isolated interior of the northern *Chaco Boreal*. At that time, Mbayá Indians occupied the western bank

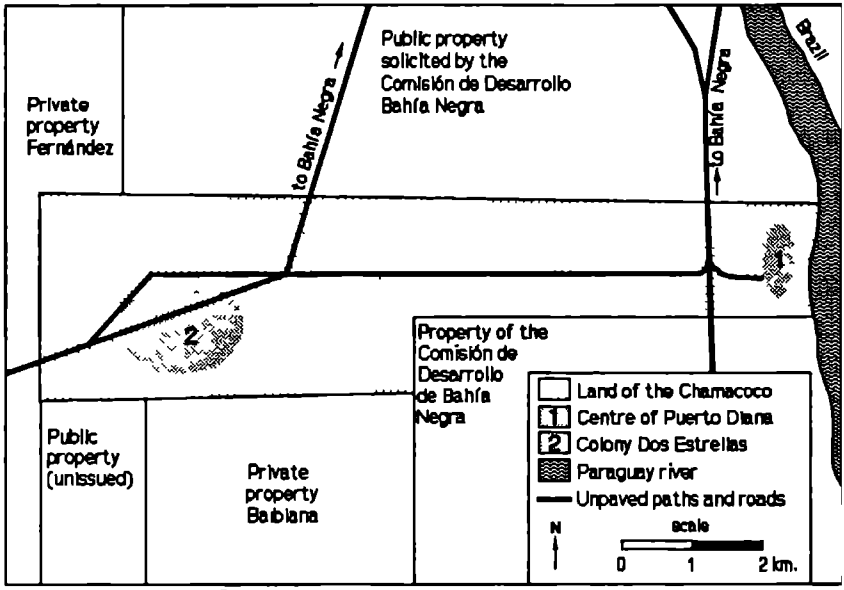
of the Paraguay river, the present-day territory of the Chamacoco. When, however, the Mbayá Indians left the west bank of the river to settle in what is now called eastern Paraguay and Brazil's Mato Grosso region, the Chamacoco exchanged the hot, dry interior for the more favourable climate of the basin. The migration of the Chamacoco towards the river almost immediately resulted in contact with the *Criollo* population, the fathers of the Salesian mission and with other Indian groups. Next to this, the Chamacoco started to exploit the resources like fish and game provided by their new habitat (Chase-Sardi et al., 1990, p. 53; Cordeu, 1989a, p. 547; Ibid, 1989b, p. 73).

During the first decades of the 20th century, during the boom in the exploitation of *quebracho* forests in Alto Paraguay for the production of tannin, large numbers of Chamacoco, as well as Indians of other ethnic groups sold their labour to the industry in Puerto Casado, Puerto Sastre and Puerto Pinasco and to the *obrajes* in the forests. When the demand for tannin collapsed in the 1940s, however, the Indians lost their income from paid labour. Many Indian groups left the river bank and headed towards the Mennonite colonies in search of new employment. The Chamacoco did not leave the valley and came to depend almost exclusively on fishing and hunting (Chase-Sardi, 1972, p. 178; INDI, 1985b, pp. 28 and 46).

The Chamacoco community of Puerto Diana is located on the bank of the Paraguay river, some three kilometres south of Bahía Negra. Although the Chamacoco do travel a lot in northern Paraguay and stay with employers and relatives for extended periods of time, the population of Puerto Diana is more or less stable and averages some 400 people. Many of the Indians that now live in the Puerto Diana were born there, others have come from Fuerte Olimpo, Puerto Leida and other small towns in Alto Paraguay, mainly because opportunities for finding employment seemed more favourable in Puerto Diana than elsewhere in the region. The land that the Indians have at their disposal is located on the riverbank and measures 2,345 hectares. In 1987, the Chamacoco became the legal owners of this land which they use communally.

Most Chamacoco of Puerto Diana live in the main village on the east side of the property where they have direct access to the river. The houses of the Indians are made of palms and *quebracho* joists, and are surrounded by small, often fenced off yards. At first sight, the village looks like a quiet, pleasant place and the people do not give the impression of living in extreme poverty. On the other side of the

property, some eight kilometres from the main village or centre, is another small village called Dos Estrellas. In October 1991, twelve families had settled more or less permanently in Dos Estrellas and many more had built provisional houses in this village where they reside for certain periods of the year. Apart from the centre on the river bank and the agricultural field further inland, the land of the Chamacoco is uncleared *monte*.



Map 9.1 Puerto Diana

In 1954, missionaries of the North American New Tribes Mission (NTM) established a small missionary station in the centre of Puerto Diana and started working among the Chamacoco. The station is presently staffed with an American couple and is administered from the headquarters of the NTM in San Carlos (Escobar, 1988, p. 69; INDI, 1985b, pp. 28 and 77).

Inquiring after the tasks to which the missionaries apply themselves, it appears that they concentrate on three different fields. In the first place, they attempt to teach the gospel to the Chamacoco. They have built a small church in the village where they hold services every Sunday. According to the missionaries, the commitment of the Indians to the gospel is quite strong, in spite of the fact that they seriously try to

avoid forcing Christianity on them.

The second responsibility of the missionaries is medical care provided by a small, but well-equipped health centre in the village. Although the missionaries are not medically trained, they advise the Indians on sanitation and hygiene, give free consultations and provide medicine at cost price.

Finally, the NTM is working on an investigation of the Chamacoco language. Some years ago, they had some American linguistics visit to collect linguistic data which is still being examined today. The ultimate goal of the missionaries is to compose a complete Chamacoco dictionary which has never been done before. Furthermore, they write educational material in the Chamacoco language; small books with texts and pictures about Chamacoco history, ancient Chamacoco leaders and common life in a Chamacoco community. The material is used in the village school, alongside other material written in Spanish.

The NTM stays aloof from political and economic matters in Puerto Diana. The missionaries say to recognise the authority of the Indian leader of the community and do not involve themselves in the contacts that the Chamacoco have with the outside world since they feel they are guests of the Indians. They start from the principle that the Indians are free to keep in contact with them or not, and they do not want to disturb this relation by giving material help that would make the Indians dependent on them. The Indians, however, often criticize the missionaries for not helping them economically.[3]

The Chamacoco of Puerto Diana are in close contact with the nearby town Bahía Negra. With its approximately 2,000 inhabitants, virtually all of non-Indian origin, Bahía Negra is the largest town of the region. Bahía Negra underwent rapid growth in the years preceding the Chaco war, mainly because a large naval base was established in the small settlement. As the political and territorial situation of the Paraguayan Chaco stabilized, however, the importance of the naval base, and with it of Bahía Negra, decreased. Unemployment, added to the remoteness of Bahía Negra and the regular flooding of the river which hinders agricultural exploitation in the region, have resulted in a substantial decrease of Bahía Negra's population. Apparently, over the past few

[3] In spite of the fact that the NTM has often been slandered in the Paraguayan press for its fanatic evangelism among the Indians, I could only approve of the work of the missionaries in Puerto Diana who I considered to be dedicated and warm people.

years, some 1,500 people have left Bahía Negra. Some settled elsewhere in the Chaco but the majority went to Corumbá, a Brazilian town about 200 kilometres up the Paraguay river (ABC Color, 15-2-1991, p. 19 Ibid, 17-1-1992, p. 31).

For the Chamacoco Indians in Puerto Diana, Bahía Negra is of vital importance for employment, services and provisions. In the centre of the village of Puerto Diana, for instance, there is a school where the Chamacoco children take lessons up to the fifth grade of primary school. The school started operating in 1978 and is presently run by three teachers, one Paraguayan and two Chamacoco. The school is officially registered with the Paraguayan Ministry of Education. For education above fifth grade, the Chamacoco students depend on Bahía Negra where they can take classes together with Paraguayan students. The same goes for health facilities. For advice and medication, the Indians visit the health centre run by the missionaries in Puerto Diana, in cases of severe health problems, however, the Indians visit the hospital of the naval base in Bahía Negra. For transport out of the region, the Chamacoco likewise depend on Bahía Negra where once a week one of the two ships of the Paraguayan national line takes in passengers for Asunción and Corumbá, and where three times a week a small military airplane of the TAM, the *Transporte Aéreo Militar*, picks up passengers and brings in provisions.

Like most Indian groups in the Gran Chaco, the Chamacoco in Puerto Diana have a strongly diversified economy. In order to make a living, they engage in various activities of both commercial and non-commercial character (Stunnenberg, 1993).

In contrast to other Indian communities in the Gran Chaco, the Chamacoco, not only those in Puerto Diana but also the people in Fuerte Olimpo and in Puerto Esperanza, have managed to make hunting into a commercially viable activity. Like many other Paraguayans, they go hunting in the Pantanal region, the hot, humid source of the Paraguay river that stretches from northern Paraguay into the Brazilian Mato Grosso, and which is the habitat of many wild animals.

Hunting is not primarily aimed at obtaining food, but provides valuable hides for which there is a profitable - although illegal - market. The most wanted game are the *teyú*, a small iguana, and the *yacaré*, a species of alligator, although the Indians sometimes also hunt for parrots, pumas and other wild animals. The Chamacoco sell the hides to Paraguayan traders who make a good profit by reselling the hides to

large warehouses in Asunción and Corumbá. A substantial part of the merchandise is exported to Japan, Europe and to the United States where the hides end up as cowboy boots. Some of the traders are said to provide the Indians with efficient weapons to improve the success of hunting. Estimations indicate that in 1989, some 450,000 *teyús* were slaughtered while the number of *yacarés* was even higher (ABC Color, 11-2-1990, p. 16; Ibid, 21-2-1990, p. 16).

From an ecological point of view, the hunt for the *yacaré* and the *teyú* is disastrous. The *yacaré* has become totally extinct in the Paraguayan part of the Pantanal whereas the number of *teyús* is rapidly decreasing too. In spite of the fact that hunting is forbidden and that control increases, the Chamacoco and other Paraguayan hunters keep on hunting the animals since the prices are going up as the supply decreases. Many hunters illegally enter Brazilian territory, running the risk of confronting private landowners or even worse, Brazilian military patrols. In several cases, the confrontations resulted in the death of the hunters, but this does not seem to scare off the Chamacoco (ABC Color, 16-6-1991, pp. 6-8).

Many Chamacoco in Puerto Diana also fish, but this is valued much less than hunting. One man expressed himself clearly saying: "Why fish? Fish don't have valuable skins". With the river at hand, however, the Chamacoco do supplement their diet with fishing, although; "For fishing one needs a canoe and we don't have enough of those". The Chamacoco of Puerto Esperanza that live thirty kilometres south of Puerto Diana, regularly sell their catch to the ships of the national line that pass every week. Unfortunately for the Chamacoco in Puerto Diana, there is no market for their catch.

More or less the same goes for *artesanía*, which is produced by many Chamacoco women. They try to retail their merchandise, mainly hats and fans made of straw and wood carvings representing the *yacaré* and the *teyú*, in Bahía Negra, but the barely 2,000 inhabitants of the town do not provide a good market for the Indian handiwork. The missionaries sometimes try to resell some of the handiwork produced by the Indians, but they have not been able to find a proper outlet either. Transporting the goods to larger markets, for instance to Asunción or Corumbá, seems too expensive.

Nearly all Chamacoco families keep small animals like chicken, goats, peacocks, turkeys and ducks around the house. The animals primarily serve to meet the community's demand for meat although occasionally some animals are sold in the streets of Bahía Negra. A few

families posses a handful of cows, pigs and sheep, but keeping these larger animals is hindered by the fact that the land of the Chamacoco is not entirely fenced. The Indians claim that in earlier days they had more cattle, but most of them were lost through the holes in the fences.

The economic importance of crop farming as a strategy to obtain livelihood is increasing. Up to 1979, the Chamacoco cultivated small plots on the river, but these efforts were frustrated by regular inundation by the river. That year, however, the flood was extraordinarily severe and long-lasting, and the Indians started clearing land in Dos Estrellas which is located on higher ground. Some families decided to move permanently to Dos Estrellas, others decided to commute between their *chacra* and their home. Nowadays, there are some thirty fields in Dos Estrellas, measuring one or two hectares, on which the Indians cultivate oranges, mango, *guayabá*, manioc and potatoes. Most of the harvest is eaten by the Indians themselves, although occasionally they try to sell something in Bahía Negra.

Farming in Dos Estrellas is not entirely successful for mainly practical reasons. First of all, the soil is clayish and therefore too hard during times of drought and too wet in times of heavy rainfall. Also, people working in Dos Estrellas are deprived of water since there are no natural depressions or lagoons nearby. A *tajamar* which has been dug in the settlement only stores water for a limited period of time. The road between Puerto Diana and Dos Estrellas also causes difficulties since it is barely passable during river flood and rainfall. The Indian farmers have trouble getting their crops out and they complain that every year they lose a substantial part of their harvest because of this. The last practical problem has its origin in the poverty of the Indians. One of them touched upon the essence of the problem saying that: "In order to work the field, I have to save money in advance since my family has to eat during the time that the crops are ripening. I cannot tide over this period of time without working as a paid labourer and then the results of farming will be poor because I did not maintain my *chacra*".

The last source of income is provided by incidental labour. Men try to obtain *changas* at *estancias* in the vicinity where they take part in fencing, clearing land and cutting fence posts. Unemployment among the non-Indian population in the region, however, has decreased the chances of finding jobs and has lowered wages. Chamacoco women sometimes do domestic work for well-off people in Bahía Negra for whom they clean, wash and iron. For a full working-day, they earn an average of US $1.

Since the Chamacoco obtained the deed to their land, the community has been legally recognised and its leaders registered with the INDI. On the 19th of October 1984, the community for the first time presented the names of its leaders to the INDI. On the 7th of February 1986, however, the community informed the INDI that leadership had changed and the names of new leaders were presented for registration. On the 28th of April 1989, the community again informed the INDI that two other leaders had been chosen, and in February 1991, the Chamacoco again requested the INDI to register a new leader, a twenty-three year old man who was still in charge in October 1991 when I visited them.

Regarding these rather swift changes to the community's leadership, it may be asked what position is taken by the leaders, and, perhaps more importantly, what the Chamacoco expect from their leaders. During the interviews it became clear that the Chamacoco do not primarily expect their leaders to take care of political matters, but expect them to obtain material help for the community. A good leader is a useful leader, one who is capable of tapping the funds of development and aid organizations. When leaders cannot present the desired material progress within a short time after their election, the Chamacoco become discontent and choose a new leader. Leadership, in other words, is not based on charisma, but is determined by the community's desire to obtain material improvement. The current leader, for instance, is a young man who speaks, reads and writes Spanish perfectly and is able to use the computer of the missionaries who he is helping compose the dictionary. The people are impressed by the abilities of their new leader and expect him to be capable of looking after their material needs. The fact that there is little continuity in the community's government, results in internal conflicts since nobody has real authority, and is a cause of difficulties when it comes to maintaining external contacts with local authorities of, for instance, Bahía Negra. The Indians sometimes try to force the missionaries into taking the lead, a position, however, that they do not want to take.

9.4 Indian land tenure in Puerto Diana

Land tenure with respect to the 2,345 hectares of land that the Chamacoco Indians currently own in Puerto Diana is characterized by a long history of bureaucratic procedures.

The process started in the early 1950s when missionaries of the

NTM requested the Paraguayan *Instituto de Reforma Agraria* (later known as the *Instituto de Bienestar Rural*, the IBR) permission to settle on public land in Puerto Diana where they intended to start working among the Chamacoco. The permission was granted by the president of the institution and the decision was confirmed by resolution 205.

In April 1974, the NTM approached the IBR requesting the title of the property. The IBR responded that the mission should consult the president of the *Comisión de Desarrollo de Bahía Negra*, the organization that was - and still is - charged with the task of administering public property in the region. In 1976, the NTM indeed applied to the commission with the request to obtain ownership of the land. In a letter written on the 10th of April, the NTM referred to the fact that the land involved had been surveyed on an earlier occasion and therefore could be considered for transference.

The request was turned down by the commission and thereupon also by the IBR, probably because the indigenist legislation, aimed at enabling the Indians to obtain landownership by themselves, was in preparation at the time. Anticipating the transference of the public property to the Chamacoco, the IBR decided in 1981 to grant the Indians a provisional title to the land. On the 10th of November 1981, it promulgated resolution 571 that decreed the land occupied by the Chamacoco community as a *Colonia Nacional Indígena*. The 2,345 hectares of land were handed over, in the words of the president of the IBR: "to give the Chamacoco the opportunity to dedicate themselves to stable economic activities like agriculture and the ranching of livestock" (Hoy, 20-4-1987, p. 26)(translation by the author). The effect of the resolution was that the land involved was reserved for the exclusive use of the Indians although the property rights remained vested in the Paraguayan state.

The Chamacoco were only partly satisfied with the measure, mainly for two reasons. First of all, they held the view that their rights following from the resolution were precarious and could be withdrawn at any time. Secondly they claimed that the land provisionally transferred to the community was insufficient with respect to both its area and to its quality. The Chamacoco informed the authorities that they aspired to full ownership of a much larger and more profitable area of land. They suggested that the INDI purchase the estate Puerto Esperanza, situated thirty kilometres south of Bahía Negra and covering 21,300 hectares, in order to enable all the Chamacoco of Alto Paraguay to settle in one area. The INDI did indeed start investigating the

possibility of purchasing the requested property (Chase-Sardi et al. 1990, p. 58; INDI, 1985b, p. 36).

In the mean time, the Chamacoco undertook action for obtaining the definitive title of landed property. In October 1984, the first leaders were chosen from their midst and presented to the INDI which recognised the leaders as the community's representatives. Decree 17.527 of the 15th of September 1986 granted the community the legal status of *personería jurídica*, with the result that all conditions for acquiring legal communal landownership had been fulfilled.

On the first of April 1985, an Indian representative of the community sent a letter to the INDI, stating that sixty Chamacoco families living in Puerto Diana requested that the property title of the land which they occupied be put in their name. Since at that time Puerto Diana was inhabited by some 700 people or some 140 families, the request was made on behalf of only a part of the population. It concerned, according to the letter, sixty families which would not be interested in moving to Puerto Esperanza, in the case where the INDI did indeed succeed in buying the property for the Chamacoco (Chase-Sardi et al. 1990, p. 56). By that time, the Chamacoco had called in the *Servicios Profesionales Socio-Antropológicos y Jurídicos* (SPSAJ), a Paraguayan non-governmental organization specialized in supporting Indian communities in their struggle to obtain landownership. The organization rendered assistance with respect to legal procedures, made a brief study of the community and held a census among the people. The support of the SPSAJ was highly valued by the Chamacoco.[4]

On the 29th of October 1986, the IBR promulgated resolution 1.787 that confirmed that the 2,345 hectares of public land in Puerto Diana would be handed over to the Chamacoco Indians. The actual transference of the title, however, was held up apparently because the IBR had noticed that the land was not entirely demarcated and fenced. It was stated in March 1987 that only an area of 2,076 hectares was considered for transference. The Indians, supported by the SPSAJ, protested against the revocation of the earlier decision and demanded that the entire area of 2,345 hectares be handed over immediately although they were aware of the fact that the land was not completely fenced. Finally, on the 13th of April 1987, the title, registered as IBR

[4] The activities of the SPSAJ are primarily directed towards Indian communities in Eastern Paraguay. For many groups of Mbaya, Paï-Tavyterã, Chiripá and Aché-Guajakí, the legal support and advice of the organization has been of crucial importance.

title 133.000, of 2,345 hectares of land was handed over to the 66 Indian families living in Puerto Diana.

On the 22th of February 1989, the INDI transferred 21,300 hectares of land, known as the estate Puerto Esperanza, over to the Chamacoco Indians (Prieto and Rolón del Puerto; 1991, anexo 3.2). According to Chase-Sardi et al. (1990, p. 60), 36 families from Puerto Diana moved to the new land where they formed the community of Wohtuta. The community of Wohtuta settled down in Potrerito where the Indians started farming rather successfully. In the course of time, however, a few families from Puerto Esperanza came back to Puerto Diana since they missed the few services that are provided by the town of Bahía Negra. In October 1991, Puerto Diana was inhabited by some 400 people, in all some 75 families. Chamacoco families belonging to the community resided temporarily on nearby *estancias*, in Fuerte Olimpo and in Puerto Esperanza.

Inquiring after the opinion of the Chamacoco concerning their landownership in Puerto Diana, two striking conclusions come to the fore.

The first conclusion is that many Indians, despite the long procedures that have been undertaken by the community in order to obtain communal landownership, are poorly informed about the present tenure situation. Seven out of the ten Chamacoco interviewed, for instance, said they had never heard of the indigenist act 904/81, in spite of the fact that without this act they would never have managed to get their hands on the property. Most people were aware of the fact that the land had been obtained by the community, but only one man could explain more or less accurately how they had managed to achieve this. Eight respondents had no idea what the status of *personería jurídica* was about and whether or not the community had been granted this legal recognition, and only four could indicate the area to which their title refers. Apparently, the struggle for obtaining landownership has been the work of a small minority whereas the rest of the community has remained virtually ignorant on the subject. I suppose it was at least partly due to the support given by the SPSAJ that the Chamacoco have been able to reach the point where they are today.

The second major conclusion is that the Chamacoco, quite unexpectedly, are not entirely satisfied with their position with regard to landownership. The Chamacoco mentioned several problems that are directly related to their land. Some of the problems have already been

touched upon briefly in the preceding sections, but for the sake of completeness I will go through all points once again.

1) The Chamacoco believe that the area of land which they presently possess in Puerto Diana is too small. Given the fact that the plot is inhabited by at least 75 families, the community is - according to act 904/81, article 18 - entitled to 7,500 hectares of land which is over three times as much as they have today.

A few Chamacoco are considering requesting an extension to their property. They had initially set eyes on the only part of unissued public property in the near vicinity which is situated some eight kilometres inland, south of the land they already possess (see map 9.1). Recently, however, some Chamacoco incidentally overheard that a Paraguayan investor is interested in buying this land. In October 1991, the Indians thought that the authorities would sell the land to a private investor rather than give it to them for free. They estimated their chances for obtaining the public property to be very poor. With respect to other pieces of land near Puerto Diana, the Indians will probably meet the same problem since the non-Indian population in the region is increasingly trying to get hold of arable land. Especially the elevated parts are in great demand (see e.g. ABC Color, 23-10-1992, p. 6).

2) Another recurrently mentioned complaint of the Chamacoco is that their land, as in fact the entire region on the bank of the Paraguay river, is frequently inundated. The Indians claim that every three or four years, the Paraguay river burst its banks, flooding the entire eastern part of their land. The floods may sometimes last from December up to March. One of the respondents explained the seriousness of the problem by saying: "What we do when the river is in flood is, we lift the northern walls out of our houses and instal them as platforms between the three remaining walls at a height of about one metre. We take the northern walls because during the floods, the wind is usually from the south, and in any case, southern wind is much colder than northern wind. During the months of flood, we live on the platforms and wade through the water when we have to go out. When the river is in flood, some families also leave the river bank and go to Dos Estrellas where they have another, provisional house". The missionaries of the NTM have secured themselves against the floods by building their houses on poles about two metres high. Water remaining from the frequent floods is responsible for an enormous quantity of insects, and in Bahía Negra I

overheard people referring to this part of Paraguay as *la fábrica de mosquitos*.

3) The physical condition of the land is another cause of bother for the Chamacoco. The clayish soil is not suited for agriculture, being either too hard or too wet. Also, apart from the centre in Puerto Diana and the colony Dos Estrellas, the entire estate is overgrown with *monte* in which cattle easily get lost and may catch all kinds of infectious diseases. The Indians intend clearing parts of the area, but up to now have not really started with the work.

4) The fact that the land of the Chamacoco is not completely fenced in also leads to problems. Cattle of the Chamacoco are lost while Paraguayan ranchers who have their land near to Puerto Diana do little to keep their herd from entering the land of the Chamacoco. When Paraguayan ranchers lose cattle in the *monte* of Puerto Diana, the Indians are often blamed for stealing the animals. Not only cattle enters through the gaps in the fences, uninvited Paraguayans are said to visit the Indian's property as well. In the words of a Chamacoco: "Anybody can enter our land because we have no fences. Sometimes Paraguayans from Bahía Negra who have drunk too much come and force our women to prostitute themselves".

Some time ago, the NTM attempted to support the Indians in fencing off the land. The mission purchased wire and poles, but according to the Indians, the length of the wire was not sufficient and nowadays they are stuck with poles without having wire to finish the job. The Indians claim that fences are missing over a length of some five kilometres.

5) Lastly, the Indians face difficulties arising from the isolated location of their land. For services and provisions which they cannot produce themselves, the Indians fully depend on Bahía Negra which in fact is an insignificant town in itself. Transport is restricted to airplanes and ships which are generally too expensive while road connections are completely absent in this remote part of the Paraguayan Chaco (ABC Color, 22-1-1992, p. 25). The isolated location frustrates the Indian attempts to find employment and hinders the marketing of crops and handiwork. An action recently undertaken by the Chamacoco to try to improve their mobility and marketing position by obtaining a motorboat to visit nearby settlements on the river bank failed because they were

not able to raise the necessary funds. In june 1991, the INDI as well as the NTM had refused to grant them a loan that would have enabled them to finance the purchase.

Considering these problems that the Indians experience with respect to their land, I conclude that although the Chamacoco find themselves in a privileged position in comparison to many other Indian communities that have not been able to obtain landownership, their position should still be described as far from enviable.

9.5 Conclusion

As a result of the indigenist legislation enacted by the Paraguayan and Argentinean governments in the 1980s, 78 Indian communities in the Gran Chaco, out of a total of 377, have managed to obtain communal landownership. From a legal point of view, these 78 communities find themselves in a privileged position since their land and resources have been definitively secured. Communal land rights have only been granted to Indian people in the Paraguayan Chaco and in the Argentine province of Formosa. Up to now, the Argentinean provinces of Salta and Chaco have not shown any positive results in this respect.

The case study of the Chamacoco Indians in the Paraguayan department of Alto Paraguay indicated that obtaining legal landownership is a long and often difficult process. In their case, the support of non-Indian advocates (the SPSAJ) was required to settle the matter. Furthermore, it appeared from the study that the Chamacoco did not obtain sufficient land. According to act 904/81, Indian families in the Paraguayan Chaco are entitled to 100 hectares of land each. The 66 Indian families that lived in Puerto Diana at the time of transfer, however, obtained only 2,345 hectares of land, about one third of the area that they should have received.

The land of the Chamacoco is not very suitable for occupation and the Indians indicated they encounter many problems that directly relate to their land. Some of these problems, that have been described in the last section of the chapter, are a nuisance to all people, Indians and non-Indians, who live in this remote part of the Paraguayan Chaco where the population is decreasing. For the Indians, however, the disadvantages of the region seem to cause extra hardship since the ability to face difficulties at least partially depends on one's economic

and political strength. Referring to the analytical framework presented in section 3.5, the Chamacoco of Puerto Diana should be regarded as "spatially marginalized", despite their legal ownership of land.

A solution for many of the present problems of the Chamacoco might appear if more Indians were able to settle permanently on the western part of their property where the damage due to the flooding is less severe. Settling in Dos Estrellas and engaging themselves in agriculture more than they do now, however, will only be possible when a number of conditions have been fulfilled. Most important in this respect are a reliable water supply and access to markets. Considering the costs and obstacles involved in improving the living conditions in Dos Estrellas, financial help and advisory support seem to be required.

10. LAND FOR THE INDIAN PEOPLE OF THE GRAN CHACO: OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES

10.1 Introduction

As this is the final chapter of the book, I will attempt to answer the central question raised in the introduction: "What have been the consequences of the spatial, social and economic incorporation of the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco for the situation of the Indian users of land, and what have been the reactions of governments, NGOs and of the Indians themselves to the process of their increasing spatial marginalization?". The thread leading through this chapter is the Indians' access to land as a possession and as a basis for obtaining their livelihood.

In the analyses that follow, I will make use of the information obtained from the six case studies presented in the preceding chapters. Since, however, the six case studies do not give a completely representative picture of all Indian communities in the Gran Chaco, reference will sometimes be made to figures and developments that go beyond the case study level. For the sake of brevity I decided not to give an extended summary of the previously presented material as detailed summaries of the case studies are made in the concluding paragraphs of each chapter.

The chapter focuses on four main topics. Firstly, I will analyze the effectiveness of the indigenist policy carried out by Paraguayan and Argentinean authorities and the legislation enacted in the 1980s to lead to Indian communal landownership. With the analytical framework of spatial marginalization from chapter three at hand, I will enumerate the main trends with respect to the indigenous population of the Chaco and their access to land and focus on tenure, quantity, quality and location. Differences and similarities between the Paraguayan and the Argentinean Chaco as far as indigenist policy and its results are concerned, will also be discussed in this section. Secondly, as will become clear in section two, indigenist policy as it is implemented today is not entirely successful in both Paraguay and Argentina. Section three thus discusses

the major obstacles that confront the Indian people in their efforts to obtain suitable land. Section four takes a "glance in the crystal ball" and tries to give a brief outline of the expected future developments. Lastly, the chapter concludes with an attempt to trace out the conditions for and principles of sound indigenist policy. This last section will, of course, largely reflect the authors viewpoint.

10.2 Drawing up the balance

Tenure

The most important topic that should be studied if one is trying to evaluate the Gran Chaco Indians' access to land is the legal manner in which they use or hold land. As was already inferred in the third chapter, Indian communities currently hold or use land through six different forms of tenure.

The case studies demonstrated that the inhabitants of private land and of public property (the Nivaklé of Loma Pytá and the Wichí of Pluma de Pato respectively) find themselves in an extremely vulnerable position. Their future on the lands they presently occupy is insecure and likely to end at short notice. They have no legal instrument whatsoever to protect themselves against eviction and they are completely at the mercy of either the private landholders or the authorities. The number of communities living in these insecure conditions is decreasing for two reasons. Firstly, the area of marginally used land in the Gran Chaco is decreasing since both private landholders and state's authorities have made great efforts in exploiting all their property in a "rational" way. Indians living on private and public properties are less tolerated now than they were a few decades ago. On the other hand, some groups that used to live on private or public land have managed to improve their way of holding or using land. Some were granted the property rights of the lands they formerly occupied illegally, others went to areas that are more open for Indian settlement.

Better off, although still in a far from enviable position, are those Indian communities whose lands have been secured by the status of "reserved areas". The Toba and Mocoví in Colonia Aborigen, for instance, presently face the illegal occupation of their land by ranchers and they seem to lack the legal means to defend the territory that the provincial government has assigned to them. Decrees promulgated to reaffirm the assignment of the areas involved have improved the legal

situation but in no way offer a final solution to the problem. The position of Indian communities living in reserved areas can only be improved by granting them legal ownership of their lands.

Indian groups that have settled on land purchased for them by (mostly religiously based) non-governmental organizations (NGOs), find themselves in a quite unique position. Although these groups, and the Lengua of Colonia Armonía are a perfect example in this respect, do not actually own the land, they may assume that the property will never be taken away from them. In fact, many NGOs transfer the property rights to the Indian communities as soon as they consider the Indians ready for landownership. This form of tenure does entail a certain risk, however, since it easily places the Indians in a position dependent on the administrative organization. The number of Indian communities living on land owned by NGOs is decreasing in favour of Indian groups with titles of their land.

Indian communities with communal or individual titles of land find themselves in the safest position. In these cases, Indian landownership is formally registered and irreversible by law since the indigenist statutes prescribe that the Indian communities are not allowed to sell the properties (sometimes for an extended period of time, sometimes without any indication of limit). The actual security offered by a title varies, however, since some groups are still not entirely capable of defending their properties against intrusion. Decent fencing and effective governmental control can support these Indian groups in securing their properties. By 1991, 78 Indian communities in the Paraguayan Chaco and in the province of Formosa, had obtained communal titles, while 15 communities had secured their lands by way of obtaining individual titles.

From the tenure point of view, the position of the Indian people has improved since they now have the possibility, at least in principle, of acquiring individual or communal landownership. Whether they are indeed capable of doing so, however, depends on a number of factors that will be discussed in the following section. For now it suffices to note that not more than 25% of all Indian communities in the region has been successful in this respect.

Quantity

The area of land that Indian communities have at their disposal varies widely. The Toba in Barrio Nam Qom share 1.3 hectares of land among 130 families, the approximately 450 Indian families of Colonia Aborigen

have 22,575 hectares of reserved land at their disposal, the 75 Chamacoco families in Puerto Diana own 2,345 hectares whereas the 65 Lengua families in Colonia Armonía hold no less than 4,700 hectares. The occupiers of private and state land in fact do not hold land at all, and the land to which they have access is not demarcated.

Whether these areas are sufficiently large to supply the Indians with a solid basis for subsistence obviously depends on the activities employed by the group. What applies for all of them, however, is that the areas are not large enough to continue with the traditional economic activities of the Gran Chaco Indians like hunting and gathering. In general, Indian communities in the Gran Chaco have been forced to look for other means of subsistence like paid work and sometimes agriculture because they have restricted access to land. Given the fact that the population of most Indian communities is increasing, the problems resulting from land shortage are likely to become more pressing in the future.

Quality

From a quality point of view it is clear that the lands allocated to Indian communities through legal title, right of usufruct or permission of occupation are generally second rate. This often involves leftover territories that have not been privatized due to a lack of potential in the field of agriculture, ranching or forest exploitation. Usually, water is the bottleneck, it is either not sufficiently available, contains too much salt for human and animal consumption, or present in excess.

The poor quality of Indian land was clearly demonstrated by the case studies of the Chamacoco in Puerto Diana and the Toba and Mocoví in Colonia Aborigen. The Indians living in these places do indeed have access to land through ownership or usufruct, but the lands held by the people are practically worthless since serious flooding hinders every effort of exploiting the land. Only small areas of the relatively large tracts of land that the Indians have at their disposal in these places, are suitable for farming.

It should be borne in mind that poor land quality is not a problem typical of the Indians, but a problem of the Gran Chaco population as a whole. Obviously, however, non-Indian land investors do not purchase just any area, but generally have the financial means to pick the best parts. Besides, the more land one has, the higher the total revenues will be and the more likely it is that some parts will be producing a profit.

Location

Most of the Indian settlements are extremely isolated. The Chamacoco in Puerto Diana, the Wichí in Pluma de Pato, the Nivaklé in Loma Pytá and to a lesser extent the Toba and Mocoví in Colonia Aborigen all have to cover long distances, and consequently incur substantial expense, to get to urban centres for provisions and services.

The remote location of most Indian settlements leads to economic problems when the communities have left the path of self-sufficiency, as most of them have. Finding paid employment is hindered by the fact that the Indians often either have to travel long distances in order to find suitable work or be content with the usually low wages paid by the few employers near the Indian settlements who do not have to compete for their labour. The same holds for reaching markets for purchasing all sorts of material goods on which the Indians have come to depend. Selling their agrarian produce and handiwork is likewise hindered by the isolated position in which most Indian communities find themselves today.

An entirely different aspect of location is the question whether the Indians have been able to occupy the lands to which they are culturally and historically tied. The six communities involved in this study have been able to stay in the former territories of their ethnic group, but examples of other communities illustrate that this is not always the case. The occupation, mainly by ranchers, of the traditional territory of the Nivaklé, for instance, which was located on the northern bank of the Pilcomayo river, induced many Nivaklé groups to migrate to the Mennonite colonies where they hoped to find work and a place to settle. The same is true for a number of Chiriguano communities that have been forced to settle in remote parts of Salta's Chaco region since their original lands have been largely occupied by foreigners. However, most Indian communities are indeed able to reside in areas that they consider their homeland.

Taking into consideration tenure, quantity, quality and location of Indian lands, I conclude that virtually all Indian communities in the Gran Chaco presently find themselves in a spatially marginalized position. Groups with titles to property have only small or marginal areas at their disposal whereas groups with sufficient and suitable land cannot be sure

that the land will not be taken from them in the future.[1]

This brings me to question as to what are the direct consequences of the spatial marginalization of the Indians. Without trying to elaborate on this question exhaustively, I can distinguish some major consequences:

The fact that the Indian people are no longer able to dwell freely throughout their former territories has brought them to adapt a semi-sedentary lifestyle. Although travelling around in the Gran Chaco to visit relatives and find temporary employment is still common practise among the Indians, most of them do now have a more or less permanent residence.

The spatially marginalized position has also affected the Indians' capability to provide for themselves in their former subsistent mode. Being deprived of their land, they often have had no other option than to assimilate into the capitalistic economy and westernized culture that surrounds them. The Indians' entry into the national societies and economies of Paraguay and Argentina has made them dependent on non-Indian employers, authorities, teachers, merchants, shopkeepers, etc. The limited access to land and the adoption of a semi-sedentary lifestyle have moreover resulted in a shift in economic activities. Hunting, gathering and fishing are still practised by many Indian groups but mainly as additional activities with probably more cultural than economic value. Indian economy has diversified strongly and taken on all sorts of activities that do not, or to lesser extent, depend on the availability of land. Paid work in various branches of agriculture and in manufacturing, producing handiwork, farming of cash-crops and of directly consumable crops, logging, employment with municipalities, etc. are all activities in which the Indians presently engage in order to obtain a livelihood. Despite the Indians' efforts to improve their economic base by diversifying their activities, nearly all Indians today belong to the

[1] It would be mistaken to assume that it is only the Indian population that has been spatially marginalized as a result of the incorporative process that has taken place and is still taking place in the Gran Chaco. In fact, an increasing number of non-Indian small farmers and rural labourers encounter the same problems as the Indians and are struggling for survival on a tiny piece of land that sometimes is not even theirs. On the other hand, non-Indian small farmers and landless people often have better perspectives since they usually have better access to credit and other facilities and earn somewhat higher wages as employees. Local and regional governments also tend to direct their support (that is, if they give any) more to the non-Indian small producers, for instance by granting them land titles, since their production, however small it may be, is valued for regional development.

poorest strata of the Paraguayan and Argentinean population (see e.g. Stunnenberg, 1993).

Although in the foregoing, local differences within the Gran Chaco have not, or at least not explicitly been pointed out, it seems useful to touch lightly on some of the differences that can be observed between the Paraguayan and Argentinean context.

For Indian access to land it is relevant to note that in the Argentine Chaco the process of incorporation has advanced more than in the Paraguayan part of the region. In comparison to Paraguay, the Argentine agrarian production in the Chaco is larger, urbanization and the establishment of infrastructure have reached a higher level, the population as a whole by far surpasses that of the Paraguayan Chaco, and land is in greater demand. The attempts of the Argentine Indian population to obtain sufficient and suitable land is met by more opposition than is the case in Paraguay.

From the viewpoint of indigenist policy, an important difference between Paraguay and Argentina is that Paraguayan policy is national policy whereas in Argentina provincial governments have almost complete authority. The provincial indigenist institutions in Argentina seem to be more concerned about the Indian population within their relatively small areas whereas the national indigenist institution of Paraguay is more involved in the Indian population of Eastern Paraguay currently facing severe conflicts with non-Indian settlers on the colonization frontier.

Overall, however, Paraguayan indigenist policy has been more effective than Argentinean policy, although it should be taken into account that the province of Formosa is showing remarkable progress. So far, Indian communities in the provinces of Salta and Chaco have not been able to claim their rights for landownership. One of the explanations for the differences in indigenist policy involves the legislation in this respect. The Paraguayan indigenist legislation is much more detailed in its procedures than the provincial acts of Argentina. The rather positive results of indigenist policy in Formosa follow from the relatively strong financial position of Formosa's indigenist institution.

Finally, NGOs working to support the Indian population in their struggle for land, seem to have achieved better results in Paraguay than in Argentina. In Paraguay, a relatively large number of Indian communities are maintaining contact with NGOs in a more or less

structural way and have profited from land purchases done by NGOs. This is, of course, partly due to the large scale settlement programme of the Mennonites.

10.3 The major obstacles

Given the fact that the Indian people of the Gran Chaco presently have the legal right to obtain landownership, it may be wondered why so few groups have been able to claim this right. It seems that Indian attempts to purchase land meet with a number of obstacles.

One of the most important obstacles is the insufficient and often fragmentary knowledge that the Indians have with respect to their legal rights arising from the indigenist statutes. Despite the efforts of mainly NGOs and to lesser extent the indigenist institutions themselves to explain the legislation to the Indians, the case studies have made it clear that many of them do not fully understand the consequences of the statutes and that a fair amount have never even heard of the statutes. Leaders of Indian communities are generally better informed than other community members. Instructions in the field of policy and legislation are usually exclusively addressed to the leaders in the supposition that they will pass the information on to the entire group. This, however, is only partially the case, which might be explained by the fact that in Indian tradition all sorts of material goods were indeed shared with relatives, whereas knowledge on the other hand was not passed on but kept since knowledge provided power and status (see e.g. Miller, 1979, p. 158).

The complexity of the indigenist legislation in itself also leads to debates and misunderstandings relating to its actual meaning and content. The statutes have been framed by non-Indian officials and are based on non-Indian concepts like *personería jurídica* and *título de la tierra* which for Indians are sometimes hard to understand. I assume that many Indians would have had a better insight into their rights and the legislation concerning land transfer if they were involved in the process of framing the statutes (see e.g. Prieto, 1988, p. 316).

Another obstacle met by many Indian communities applying for land is the instability of their organizational structure. The populations of most communities are changing rapidly because families leave and arrive continuously. Personal relations within the communities tend to loose strength because of this and internal disagreements are likely to

arise. Especially those communities that have come into existence as a result of external pressures, like for instance the urban Indian areas of which Barrio Nam Qom Clorinda was a clear example, are often disturbed by political and cultural conflicts. The fact that the internal social, cultural and political coherence of many groups is decreasing, hinders the process of claiming communal rights. Reaching agreement about what to claim and how to act often is a delicate matter.

The instability of the organizational structure of many Indian communities is also due to the lack of appropriate leaders. Leadership tends to change swiftly and is generally based on short term individual interests rather than on charisma, common interests and experience. The lack of appropriate leaders is especially felt when Indian groups wish to be considered for landownership. Before communities can apply for the legal status of *personería jurídica*, the community has to reach agreement about the subject of leadership. The process of electing leaders, however, often leads to long-lasting debates and sometimes even conflicts within the communities. As long as the Indians cannot present a chosen representative to the indigenist institution, landownership is out of the question (ENM, 1984, p. 200; Prieto and Rolón del Puerto; 1991, p. 41).

Many obstacles encountered by Indian groups that apply for landownership, however, are not so much due to the Indians themselves, but are related to the institutions that are supposed to support the Indian population in this respect. The indigenist institutions, charged with implementing the statutes, generally do not acquit themselves of their duties and responsibilities in an appropriate manner.

On the one hand, the effectiveness of the policies of the indigenist institutions is limited by the fact that they are unable to perform the difficult tasks assigned to them. In general, the institutions lack the financial means to undertake effective action. Wages for their employees, costs of all sorts of legal procedures, financing trips to Indian communities in the interior and paying the high costs of purchasing, surveying and demarcating Indian lands exceed their budgets. Apart from budgetary deficits, the institutions often lack the capability to act effectively since in many cases, the staff is poorly trained for its tasks and unable to cope with the complexity of the legal procedures specified in the statutes. As a matter of fact, many employees have even never left the cities where the institutions have their offices to see what is really going on in the interior. The incapability of the institutions to carry out an effective policy is

expressed in an enormous bureaucracy which may easily dishearten Indian communities that attempt to apply for land. Legal procedures aimed at obtaining landownership can take several years to complete as is illustrated by the case studies of the Toba in Barrio Nam Qom and the Chamacoco in Puerto Diana.

On the other hand, I seriously question whether the institutions aim to help as many Indian communities as possible with the restricted financial means and personnel they have at their disposal. The institutions are, after all, appendages of the Paraguayan and Argentinean governments that consider land primarily as a resource meant to support economic development. Indians are not regarded as productive users of land and therefore authorities generally tend to favour non-Indian people who wish to obtain land instead of handing it over to the Indians. On the whole, the present rural development policy of both the Paraguayan and the Argentinean governments results in a further spatial expansion of agrarian modes of production in the Gran Chaco, meanwhile reducing the chances for the Indians to obtain landownership (see e.g. CEC, 1989, p. 20). The example of the Wichí of Pluma de Pato, who will soon have to make way for rural development by the *Criollo* population of the region, is a clear illustration of governmental policy in this respect.

Starting from the idea that the indigenist institutions are strongly linked to the governments and in a certain way are the executors of their policy, it becomes understandable why so many procedures concerning land transferences to Indian communities take such a long time. It seems that, in a number of cases, effective action by the institutions is deliberately delayed since the outcome is not approved off by the authorities. When national or provincial interests are at stake, like when oil was found in the Argentine province of Formosa, the indigenist institutions see to it that Indian policy does not interfere with the economic development of the region, province or country.

The position taken by the indigenist institutions may also obstruct Indian attempts at settling the land problem without the interference of the government. Nowadays, all legal and financial matters related to Indian efforts to obtain land are concentrated in the hands of the institutions. Direct relations between Indian communities and NGOs are largely cut off and channelled through the IPA, ICA, IDACH and INDI. In this manner, the Indian land problem has in fact been institutionalized and the institutions have incorporated the Indian population and the NGOs working to support them. Before action can be undertaken, the institutions have to be consulted and asked for their approval.

The last obstacle met by Indian communities that try to obtain land arises from the fact that there is hardly any free land available in the Gran Chaco that can be transferred to them without substantial expense. By the time that the indigenist acts were enacted, the most fertile parts of the Gran Chaco had already passed into private hands and therefore were no longer accessible to the Indian communities. Since in the indigenist acts preference is given to the transference of public property to Indian communities, the effectiveness of the statutes largely depends on the availability of public property. The statutes indeed do permit the expropriation of privately held land in favour of the Indian people, but the readiness of the institutions to implement such a drastic and politically delicate measure, is rare.

10.4 Looking into the crystal ball

The position of the Indian land users in the Gran Chaco depends on many different factors which makes it difficult to predict future developments. The case studies, however, have indicated some tendencies which are likely to influence the Indians' access to land in the coming years.

The privatization of land in the Gran Chaco, for instance, has reached an advanced stage and is likely to continue in the future. Indians have not been passed over completely, however, since some 25% of the Indian communities have obtained landownership. Besides, the process of land transference has not come to a complete stop. On the contrary, it has become clear that Indian land tenure is not static but extremely dynamic. Nowadays, a considerable number of Indian communities are applying for land and it may be assumed that at least a portion will indeed succeed in their efforts. At the same time, some Indian groups presently living on land owned by NGOs can be expected to obtain ownership of these lands. Indian communities settled on public properties, be these lands reserved for them or not, will either be removed from these areas or will eventually obtain ownership of them. The dynamics of land tenancy in the Gran Chaco are reflected in figure 10.1. In the figure, a distinction has been made between likely changes and possible changes.

Figure 10.1 indicates my conclusion that there is a fair chance that more Indian communities will eventually become the owners of the land they

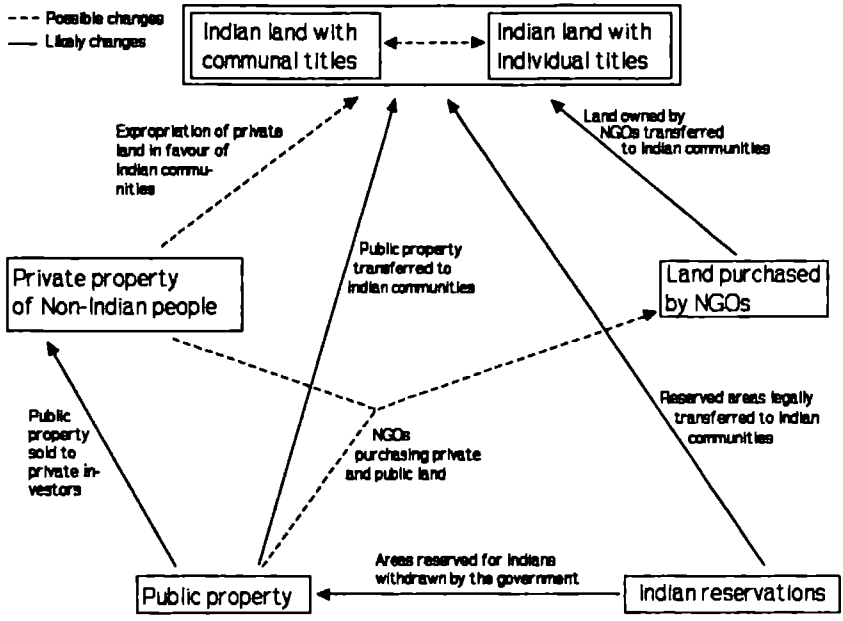


Figure 10.1 Predicted changes in land tenure in the Gran Chaco

occupy. Whether the Indian groups that in the coming years manage to obtain property titles of land will also be granted sufficient land of reasonable quality, is another issue which is hard to predict.

As shown in the preceding chapters, most Indian communities are presently trying to diversify their economic modes of subsistence. A wide variety of activities is currently adopted by the Indian people to make their livelihood. For the time being, the great variety of economic activities in which the Indians engage, should be regarded as a kind of survival strategy. The economic situation in which most Indians find themselves is extremely precarious and leaves them with no other option than to use every source of income available.

In the future, the diversified economic base may well provide the Indians with certain advantages. Since they no longer engage in a sole economic activity, their interests and risks are spread which may make them less vulnerable to misfortunes and less dependent on non-Indian employers. Furthermore, the fact that the Indians have also adopted activities which do not require large areas of land may turn out to be

profitable for those Indian groups that in the coming years are not able to secure land tenancy rights. In order to obtain profit from their diversified economic base, the Indians will have to obtain a better bargaining position on the labour and commodity market, since up this day, they still are entirely in the power of potential employers and buyers of their products.

From a socio-political point of view, Indian people are gradually taking a stronger position in the Argentine and Paraguayan society. Worldwide attention on the difficult fate of the Amerindians has resulted in increased tolerance for the Indian way of life and in a revaluation of Indian history in both countries. The increasing interest in national society for the Indian people is manifest on various levels. Nowadays, bilingual education is accepted by national law, Indian communities are considered for legal recognition, Indian common law, *el derecho consuetudinario*, is more and more being accepted as an appropriate basis for indigenist policy, Indian participation in political matters on national level is under serious discussion and in both countries the Indians have been involved in the preparation of the constitution.

The Indians also seem to have more opportunities for organizing themselves in order to promote their common interests, to co-ordinate their political actions and to assemble in pan-tribal organizations. In Paraguay, the *Asociación de Parcialidades Indígenas*, the API, started work in 1972. For a long time, the API remained a rather marginal organization with little political power. Nowadays, however, its position is getting stronger and the API is directly involved in the work of the INDI. In Argentina, Indians from various ethnic groups have assembled since 1975 under the auspices of the *Asociación Indígena de la República Argentina*, the AIRA. Since the election of a democratic government in 1983, the AIRA has had more opportunity for political action. Both the API and the AIRA have been legally recognised as representative bodies of the Indians (see e.g. AIRA, 1987, p. 23; INDI, 1992; Serbín, 1981, p. 430)

Whether the Indians will be able to gain enough political power to improve their actual living conditions remains to be seen, and in any case this will not be of short term consequence for their gradually changing position in national society.

The last tendency to be mentioned here is the progress made by Churches and other non-governmental organizations in improving the

position of the Indian people. In the past, many organizations that tried to support the Chaco Indians, restricted themselves to providing material help, education and health care. It goes without saying that these activities are of vital importance, but in legal terms, the Indians hardly made any advancement as a result of the assistance rendered to them.

In the 1980s, many NGOs engaged in purchasing land for the Indians since the lack of land was what they considered the major problem confronted by these people. Large areas were purchased, sometimes with the help of international aid funds, and settlement projects were started in order to provide the Indians with land and income. The projects were partly successful. The living conditions of the Indians involved indeed improved, but at the same time they became dependent on the assistance rendered by the NGOs.

At the end of the 1980s, many NGOs shifted their attention from material support to legal support. Instead of buying land and conducting integrated settlement projects that entailed large financial inputs, they began to apply themselves to giving legal support and advice that should enable the Indians to vindicate their rights following from the recently enacted indigenist legislation. At the same time, the work of many NGOs became more professional, continuity of the policy and the staffing increased and the support was critically reviewed by the NGOs themselves.

The services presently provided by many NGOs aim to empower Indians and give them more independence when it comes to the contacts that they maintain with society at large. We may hope, and to a certain extent expect, that in the long run, the Indians will be able to stand up for their rights without the mediation of NGOs.

The foregoing may lead to the conclusion that the prospects for the Chaco Indians are not entirely negative and that there is reason for cautious optimism. If the Indians are given sufficient time to find their way in the newly established society of which they have become a part, they may have a chance to survive as culturally and socially distinctive groups with their own history, characteristics and rights. We can only hope, however, that the actual improvements in the living conditions of the Indians are not postponed too long, because otherwise there will not be any Indian population left to profit from the advancements that gradually begin to show.

10.5 Concluding remarks

After having studied the present-day position of the Indian people of the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco, I have come to the conclusion that indigenous policy should start from three main principles: the Indians' right to own land, the Indians' right to political sovereignty and the Indians' right to receive appropriate support.

1) The right to own land

Given the fact that the Indian people of the Gran Chaco are the indigenous inhabitants of this region and have been unjustly deprived of their land and resources, indigenist policy should be aimed at retroceding at least a part of the former Indians' territories, including the right to exploit both the replaceable and the unreplaceable resources available. Furthermore, Indians should be given the right to decide for themselves in what way (communally or individually) they wish to administer the property to which they are entitled. Only when the Indians have access to sufficient and suitable land will they have a chance to improve their subsistence base and to break free from the economic dependence that has become their part.

In addition to this, we should bear in mind that land is not only of economic importance for the Indians, but is of cultural and social value as well. Besides this, areas administered by the Indians also serve as places of refuge where they can retire when the pressures put on them by national society have become too much.

In principle, the Indians' entitlement to landownership is embedded in the recently enacted indigenist statutes of Paraguay and Argentina. If the authorities really take their responsibilities seriously, they will have to see to it that these statutes are observed far more stringently than is the case at present.

2) The right of political sovereignty

The Indian groups presently living in the Gran Chaco share cultures, backgrounds and languages which are different from national society. Starting from the principle that the Indians are culturally and ethnically different, it seems unjust to subject them to a political and legal system which is dominated by non-Indians. In other words, Indians are entitled to political autonomy for as far as this is possible within the context of the Argentine and Paraguayan constitutional states.

The Indians' subjection to non-Indian types of organization is

particularly felt in the field of indigenist policy. National and provincial indigenist institutions are presently run and dominated by non-Indian people who generally pay little attention to the actual needs and ambitions of the Indians. These institutions and their policy should be reorganized in such a way that indigenist policy becomes Indian policy; giving the Indian people the possibility to decide for themselves how to improve their difficult situation. The most appropriate type of organization is that designed, implemented and managed by the Indian people themselves.

If Indians are enabled to determine their own fate more than they are capable of today, the apathy and "wait-and see behaviour", which seem to have become characteristic of the Indian population of the Gran Chaco, will hopefully disappear and make way for a more active and optimistic attitude of a people that determines its own future.

3) The right to receive appropriate support

As a result of the fact that the Indians have always been subordinated to national interests and disadvantaged as compared with non-Indian Paraguayans and Argentines, support that enables them to overcome their disadvantaged position is justified in every respect. A precondition of giving support, however, is that help should only be given when the people involved explicitly ask for it. Those communities that choose to be left alone, should not be confronted by efforts to start aid projects among them, no matter how well-intended these efforts may be, but should be left in peace.

In case support is given, it should be organized in such a way as not to make the Indians dependent on it. Material help, as has frequently been given in the past, has not resulted in Indian emancipation. On the contrary, it seems that aid programmes as conducted in the past have suppressed Indian efforts to take care of themselves and aid organizations have in fact become the new hunting grounds of many Indian groups. Help programmes should focus on non-material support aimed at Indian emancipation, should only be given when continuity of the staff, finances and organization of the programmes is guaranteed for an extended period of time, and should be conducted in direct consultation with the people involved.

In my view, appropriate support should focus on the following activities: educational facilities that enable the Indians to defend their own rights and to manage their own organization and services, health facilities that respect indigenous practices, the position of women, small-

scale industrial and agricultural production, improving the bargaining position of the Indians on the labour and commodity market, and consultation with the Indians about their actual needs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Articles

ALBERT, Bruce. Indian Lands, Environmental Policy and Military Geopolitics in the Development of the Brazilian Amazon: The Case of the Yanomami. *Development and Change, 23, 1*, pp. 35-70. 1992.

ALARCON, Jose de and Riccardo PITTINI. *El Chaco Paraguayo y sus tribus, apuntos etnográficos y leyendas, la Misión Salesiana*. Turin: Sociedad Editora Internacional. 1924.

ALTAMIRANO, Marcos Antonio, Alba N. DÉLLAMEA DE PRIETO and Cirilo Ramón SBARDELLA. *Historia del Chaco*. Resistencia: Dione Editoria. 1987.

ARANCIBIA. U.G. Los Indios del Pilcomayo piden trabajo no comida. *Estudios, 589*, pp. 28-32. 1968.

ARENS, Richard. *The Forest Indians in Stroessner's Paraguay*. Philadelphia: Survival International. 1978.

ASOCIACIÓN DE SERVICIOS DE COOPERACIÓN INDÍGENA MENNONITA (ASCIM). *Estatutos de la Asociación de Servicios de Cooperación Indígena Mennonita*. Filadelfia: ASCIM. 1976.

ASOCIACIÓN DE SERVICIOS DE COOPERACIÓN INDÍGENA MENNONITA (ASCIM). *Jahresberichte des Executiv-Teams der Indianer Beratungsbehörde über das Arbeitsjahr 1982-1991*. Filadelfia: ASCIM. 1983a-1992a.

ASOCIACIÓN DE SERVICIOS DE COOPERACIÓN INDÍGENA MENNONITA (ASCIM). *Informe financiero y balance general de la ASCIM*. Filadelfia: ASCIM. 1988b-1990b.

ASOCIACIÓN DE SERVICIOS DE COOPERACIÓN INDÍGENA MENNONITA (ASCIM). *En busca de una subsistencia agraria, situación socio-económica de los Indígenas del Chaco Central Paraguayo*. Filadelfia: ASCIM. 1990c.

ASOCIACIÓN INDÍGENA DE LA REPÚBLICA ARGENTINA (AIRA). Argentinien, Ende der Unterdrückung der indianischen Urbevölkerung. *Lateinamerika Nachrichten, 14, 155*, pp. 20-24. 1987.

BALDUS, Herbert. *Indianerstudien im nordöstlichen Chaco*. Leipzig: Verlag von C.L. Hirschfeld. 1931.

BALEN, Chr. v. Jr. *Argentinië*. Baarn: De Boekerij. 1937.

BANCO PARAGUAYO DE DATOS (BPD). *Acciones indigenistas en el Paraguay. Acontecimientos y perspectivas*. Asunción: United Nations Association International Service/Banco Paraguayo de Datos. 1980.

BARDOMAS, Silvia A. *Diagnóstico de los puesteros criollos occupantes de los lotes fiscales 15, 17, 23 y 19 en el área de Los Blancos*. Salta: Fundación para el Desarrollo en Justicia y Paz. 1990.

BARTOLOMÉ, Leopoldo J. Política y redes sociales en una comunidad urbana de indígenas Toba. Un análisis de liderazgo y "brokerage". *Anuario Indigenista, 31*, pp. 77-97. 1971.

BARTOLOMÉ, Leopoldo J. *Relocalizados. Antropología de poblaciones desplazados*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones del IDES. 1985.

BARTOLOMÉ, Miguel Alberto. The Situation of the Indians in the Argentine: The Chaco Area and Misiones Province. In: W. Dostal (ed.) *The Situation of the Indians in South America*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, pp. 218-251. 1972.

BARTOLOMÉ, Miguel Alberto. Nación y etnias en Paraguay. *América Indígena, 69, 3*, pp. 407-418. 1989.

BARÚA, Guadelupe. Principios de organización en la sociedad Mataco. *Suplemento Antropológico, 21, 1*, pp. 73-129. 1986.

BEAUCLERK, John, Jeremy NARBY and Janet TOWNSEND. *Indigenous Peoples: A Fieldguide for Development*. Oxford: Oxfam. 1988.

BERISSO, Enrique. Informe de avance la Quena-Morrilo. Salta: [unpublished report]. 1991.

BERTONE, Maria Raquel. *Tratamiento de la cuestión indígena*. Estudios e Investigaciones, No. 2. Buenos Aires: Talleres de la Imprenta del Congreso de la Nación. 1985.

BODLEY, John H. *Victims of Progress*. California: Cumming Publishing Co. 1975.

BORELLO, José Antonio. El desplazamiento de la frontera agrícola en la Argentina contemporáneo. *Revista Geográfica, 108*, pp. 5-18. 1988.

BORRINI, Héctor R. and Enrique C. SCHALLER. *El proceso de colonización en el impenitrable chaqueño* [Cuadernos de Geohistoria Regional, No. 5]. Corrientes. 1981.

BORRINI, Héctor Rubén. *Colonia Bouvier. Un ejemplo de colonización privada a fines de siglo 19 en el territorio nacional de Formosa* [Cuadernos de Geohistoria Regional, No. 16]. Resistencia: Conicet. 1986.

BRAY, David. *El Estado, los donantes extranjeros y los pueblos indígenas de la Provincia del Chaco, Argentina. De la subyugación al comienzo de la autodeterminación, 1884-1988* [Gadis, Serie de Documentos de Trabajo, No. 6]. Buenos Aires: Grupo de Análisis y Desarrollo Institucional y Social. 1989.

BREMEN, Volker von. *Moderne Jagd- und Sammelgründe: Entwicklungsprojekte unter Indianern des Gran Chaco (Argentinien, Paraguay, Bolivien)* [EDP Entwicklungspolitik, Materialen No. 3]. Frankfurt: Entwicklungspolitik des Evangelischen Pressedienstes. 1987a.

BREMEN, Volker von. Los Ayoreode cazados. *Suplemento Antropológico, 22, 1*, pp. 75-94. 1987b.

BRODERSOHN, Victor and Daniel SLUTZKY. Dependencia interna y desarrollo. El caso del Chaco. *Desarrollo Económico, 18, 70*, pp. 217-229. 1978.

BÜNSTORF, Jürgen. Mit der Eisenbahn durch den argentinischen Gran Chaco. *Geographische Rundschau, 21, 5*, pp. 189-192. 1969.

BÜNSTORF, Jürgen. Entwicklungsprobleme in Nord-Argentinien. *Geographische Rundschau, 23, 1*, pp. 31-35. 1971a.

BÜNSTORF, Jürgen. Formen der Viehwirtschaft im argentinischen Gran Chaco. *Geographische Rundschau, 23, 12*, pp. 462-471. 1971b.

BÜNSTORF, Jürgen. Tanningewinnung und Landerschliessung im argentinischen Gran Chaco. *Geographische Zeitschrift, 59, 3*, pp. 177-204. 1971c.

BÜNSTORF, Jürgen. Die Ackerbauzone im Argentinischen Gran Chaco, ein Beitrag zum Problem der Anbaugrenze in den wechselfeuchten Subtropen. *Geographische Rundschau, 28, 4*, pp. 144-155. 1976.

BÜNSTORF, Jürgen. Indianer im Argentinischen Gran Chaco: Integration oder Segregation? In: D. Benecke, M. Domitra and M. Mols (eds.) *Integration in Lateinamerika: Beitrage des Symposiums der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutsche Lateinamerika Forschung*, pp. 323-350. München. 1980.

BÜNSTORF, Jürgen. Neue Entwicklungsprojekte in Nordargentinien: Planmässige Regionalentwicklung oder geopolitische Akte? *Geographische Rundschau, 33, 11*, pp. 526-532. 1981.

BÜNSTORF, Jürgen. *El papel de la industria taninera y de la economía agropecuaria en la ocupación del espacio chaqueño* [Separate de Folia Histórica del Nordeste, No. 5]. Resistencia, pp. 7-59. 1982.

BÜNSTORF, Jürgen. Familie Chara in Resistencia. *Geographie Heute, 6, 32*, pp. 10-15. 1985.

BÜNSTORF, Jürgen. Die Ausbildung kolonialer Strukturen in spät erschlossenen Binnenräumen. Beispiel Argentinischer Gran Chaco. In: K. Kohut (ed.) *Der eroberte Kontinent, historische Realität, Rechtfertigung und literarische Darstellung der Kolonisation Amerikas*. pp. 376-389. Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert Verlag. 1991.

BÜNSTORF, Jürgen. *Argentinien, geographische Strukturen, Daten, Entwicklungen*. Stuttgart/Dresden: Ernst Klett Verlag für Wissen und Bildung. 1992.

BURGER, Julian. *Report from the Frontier: The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books Ltd. 1987.

CADENA DE HESSLING, Maria Teresa. *Enciclonoa. Enciclopedia ilustrada del Nordeste*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Puna. 1985.

CÁMARA DE DIPUTADOS DE LA NACIÓN ARGENTINA. *Ley 23.302: Ley sobre política indígena y apoyo a las comunidades aborígenes*. Buenos Aires. 1985.

CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS CRISTIANOS (CEC). *Consulta 12-14/4/89* [Cuadernos Pastoral de la Tierra, No. 3]. Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios Cristianos. 1989.

CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS Y PROMOCIÓN AGRARIA. *La economía del azúcar en la década de 70*. Buenos Aires: Cepa publicaciones. 1984.

CHASE-SARDI, Miguel. The Present Situation of the Indians in Paraguay. In: W. Dostal (ed.) *The Situation of the Indians in South America*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, pp. 173-213. 1972.

CHASE-SARDI, Miguel and Adolfo COLOMBRES. *Por la liberación del Indígena*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Sol. 1975.

CHASE-SARDI, Miguel. *Pequeño decamarón Nivaclé*. Asunción: Ediciones NAPA. 1981.

CHASE-SARDI, Miguel. Las políticas indigenistas en el Paraguay. *Suplemento Antropológico, 22, 1*, pp. 265-271. 1987a.

CHASE-SARDI, Miguel. *Derecho consuetudinario Chamacoco*. Asunción: R.P Ediciones. 1987b.

CHASE-SARDI, Miguel. Situación de los Indígenas en el Paraguay. *América Indígena, 69, 3*, pp. 419-430. 1989.

CHASE-SARDI, Miguel. *El derecho consuetudinario indígena y su bibliografía antropológica en el Paraguay*. Asunción: Centro de Estudios de Antropología de la Universidad Católica. 1990.

CHASE-SARDI, Miguel, Augosto BRUN and Miguel Angel ENCISO. *Situación sociocultural, económica, jurídico-política actual de las comunidades indígenas en el Paraguay*. Asunción: Centro Interdisciplinario de Derecho Social y Economía Política. 1990.

CIDA. *Land Tenure Conditions and Socio-Economic Development of the Agricultural Sector*. Washington: Interamerican Commitee for Agricultural Development. 1965.

COLLIER, Simon. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Latin America and the Caribbean*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1985.

COMISIÓN NACIONAL DE DESARROLLO REGIONAL DEL CHACO. *Proyecto Chaco*. Asunción: Gobierno del Paraguay, Comisión Nacional de Desarrollo Regional del Chaco. 1983.

CONSEJO AGRARIO NACIONAL. *Tierras fiscales provinciales*. Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Economía, Secretaría de Estado de Agricultura y Ganadería. 1975.

CORDEU, Jorge and Alejandra SIFFREDI. *De la algarroba al algodón. Movimientos milenaristas del Chaco Argentino*. Buenos Aires: Juárez Editor. 1971.

CORDEU, Edgardo Jorge. Los Chamacoco o Ishír del Chaco Boreal. Algunos aspectos de un proceso de desestructuración étnica. *América Indígena, 49, 3*, pp. 545-580. 1989a.

CORDEU, Edgardo Jorge. Aishtuwénte. Las ideas de deidad en la religiosidad Chamacoco, Tomo 1. *Suplemento Antropológico, 24, 1*, pp. 7-78. 1989b.

CORDEU, Edgardo Jorge. Aishtuwénte. Las ideas de deidad en la religiosidad Chamacoco, Tomo 2. *Suplemento Antropológico, 24, 2*, pp. 51-86. 1989c.

CRUZ, Luis María de la. *La situación de occupación territorial de las comunidades aborígenes del Chaco Salteño y su tratamiento legal* [Cuadernos Pastoral de la Tierra, No. 2]. Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios Cristianos. 1989a.

CRUZ, Luis María de la. *La legislación indigenista vigente en la República Argentina* [Cuadernos Pastoral de la Tierra, No. 4]. Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios Cristianos. 1989b.

D'ALESSIO, Néstor. Chaco: un caso de pequeña producción en crisis. *Revista Latinoamericana de Sociología, 5, 2*, pp. 384-385. 1969.

DALY, Herman E. Carrying Capacity as a Tool of Development Policy: The Ecuadoran Amazon and the Paraguayan Chaco. *Ecological Economics, 2, 3*, pp. 187-197. 1990.

DERKSEN, Enrique. Los Menonitas: origen, dilema religioso vivencial, desafío actual. *Estudios Paraguayos, 16, 1-2*, pp. 43-78. 1988.

DIAZ ALEJANDRO, Carlos F. *Essays on the Economic History of the Argentine Republic*. New Haven/Londen: Yale University Press. 1970.

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL AGROPECUARIA, DEPARTEMENTO DE SUELO, RIEGO Y CLIMA. *Lote fiscal no. 20, Departamento de Rivadavia* [map]. Salta: Gobierno Provincial de Salta. 1988.

DORFMAN, Ariel. Into another Jungle: The Final Journey of the Matacos. *Grassroots Development, 12, 2*, pp. 2-15. 1988.

DÜRKSEN, Heindrich, Peter P. KLASSEN, Abram BOSCHMANN, Helmut GIESBRECHT, Jacob HARDER and Peter WINES. *Fünfzig Jahre Kolonie Fernheim*. Asunción: Imprenta Modelo. 1980.

EQUIPO NACIONAL DE MISIONES (ENM). *Tierra y sociedad. Problemática de la tierra urbana, rural e indígena en el Paraguay* [Cuadernos de Pastoral Social, No. 4]. Asunción: Conferencia Episcopal Paraguaya. 1984.

EQUIPO NACIONAL DE MISIONES (ENM). *Plan de pastoral misionera para las comunidades indígenas en el Paraguay*. Asunción: Conferencia Episcopal Paraguaya. 1985.

EQUIPO NACIONAL DE MISIONES (ENM). *Algunas consideraciones sobre el estatuto de las comunidades indígenas*. Asunción: Conferencia Episcopal Paraguaya. 1987.

EQUIPO NACIONAL DE PASTORAL ABORIGEN (ENDEPA). *El Indígena, el gran desconocido*. Formosa: Equipo Nacional de Pastoral Aborigen. 1987.

EQUIPO NACIONAL DE PASTORAL ABORIGEN (ENDEPA). *Nuestro hermano el Indígena. Somos la tierra como los árboles*. Formosa: Equipo Nacional de Pastoral Aborigen. 1990.

ESCOBAR, Ticio. *Misión etnocidio*. Asunción: RP Ediciones. 1988.

FOGEL Augusto. Desarrollo humano, perfil del componente. In: *Informe del Consejo Directivo del Instituto Paraguayo del Indígena sobre la Participación del Instituto en el Proceso Constituyente*. Asunción: Editorial Litocolor, pp. 56-71. 1992.

FOWERAKER, Joe. *The Struggle for Land: A Political Economy of Pioneer Frontier in Brazil from 1930 to the Present Day*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1983.

FRENCH, Harold. *Argentinië, feiten en indrukken van een gigantisch arbeidsveld*. Tilburg: Nederland's boekhuis. 1949.

GANSON, Barbara. Contacto intercultural: Un estudio de los Payaguáes del Paraguay, 1528-1870. *Suplemento Antropológico, 24, 1*, pp. 79-122. 1989.

GONZÁLEZ CASANOVA, Pablo. Internal Colonialism and National Development. *Studies in Comparative International Development, 1, 4*, pp. 118-139. 1965.

GOOD, Merle and Phyllis GOOD. *Twenty Most Asked Questions about the Amish and Mennonites*. Lancaster: Good Books. 1979.

GRIVA, Edelmi E. Síntesis del censo indígena nacional realizado en la República Argentina. *América Indígena, 30, 3*, pp. 657-672. 1970.

GRUBB, Barbrooke W. *Unknown People in an Unknown Land* [fourth edition, first edition 1911]. Londen: Seeley, Service and Co. Limited. 1925.

GRÜNBERG, Georg. Landraub an Indianern: internationale Siedlungspolitik im Gran Chaco. In: *Wissenschaftliches Symposium des Berliner Instituts für Vergleichende Sozialforchung. Bruchstellen der Entwicklung Lateinamerika in den 80-er Jahren*, pp. 42-45. Berlin. 1982.

HACK, Hendrik. *Die Kolonisation der Mennoniten im paraguayischen Chaco*. Amsterdam: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen. 1961.

HACK, Hendrik. Van jagers tot boeren: veranderingen in de kultuur van de Chaco Indianen. *Geografisch Tijdschrift, 9, 5*, pp. 374-387. 1975.

HACK, Hendrik. *Indianer und Mennoniten im Paraguayischen Chaco*. Amsterdam: Centro de Estudios y Documentación Latinoamericanos [incidental publications, No. 7]. 1976.

HACK, Hendrik. Land Problems in the Paraguayan Chaco. *Boletín de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe, 34*, pp. 99-113. 1983.

HACK, Hendrik. Eine Insel des Wohlstands. *Mennoblatt, 61, 20*, pp. 3-5. 1990.

HACK, Hendrik. Nieuw kolonisatiefront in Latijns Amerika. *Nieuwe Geografenkrant, 15, 2*, pp. 18-19. 1991.

HECHT, Alfred. *The Agricultural Impact of the Paraguayan Trans-Chaco-Highway*. Waterloo: Department of Geography [working papers, No. 2]. 1974.

HEIN, David D. *Die Ayoreos, unsere Nachbarn: Anfaenge der Mission im noerdlichen Chaco*. Filadelfia: ASCIM. No date.

HENNESSY, Alistair. *The Frontier in Latin American History*. London: Edward Arnold. 1981.

HERAS, Garcia R. Hostage Private Companies under Restraint: Britisch Railways and Transport Co-ordination in Argentina during the 1930s. *Journal of Latin American Studies, 19, 1*, pp. 41-67. 1987.

HEREDIA, Luís Domingo. La discriminación como manifestación de fricciones interétnicas entre la sociedad nacional y comunidades de aborígenes Toba y Mataco. *Revista del Instituto de Antropología, 4*, pp. 197-208. 1978.

HOEK, Raymond. De sloppenwijken van het hart, een studie naar het aborigene zijn in het Argentinië van Alfonsín. Nijmegen: [unpublished M.A. thesis]. 1990.

HOGERZEIL, H. v. *Argentinië*. Leiden: H.E. Stenfert Kroese's uitgevers-maatschappij. 1945.

HUECK, Kurt. *Die Walder Südamerikas*. Stuttgart: Gustav Fischer Verlag. 1966.

IÑIGO CARRERA, Nicolás. Génesis, formación y desarrollo de las clases en una zona de pequeños productores. El territorio algodonero chaqueño Argentino. In: Oficina Internacional del Trabajo (ed.) *Economía Campesina y Empleo*. Santiago de Chile, pp. 240-263. 1981.

IÑIGO CARRERA, Nicolás. *Violence as an Economic Force: The Process of Proletarisation among the Indigenous People of the Argentinean Chaco, 1884-1930* [IWGIA documents, No. 46]. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. 1982.

IÑIGO CARRERA, Nicolás. *Colonización del Chaco* [Historia testimonial Argentina, Documentos Vivido de Nuestro Pasado]. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina. 1983.

INITIATIVA CRISTIANA. *Programa de desarrollo comunitario de la Iglesia Anglicana en el Norte Argentino*. Salta: Initiativa Cristiana. 1980.

INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGACIONES ECONÓMICAS Y FINANCIERAS DE LA CGE - ARGENTINA (IIEF). Panorama de la economía chaqueña en 1968. In: *Estudios sobre la Economía Argentina, 1*, pp. 89-101. Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Zlotopioro Hnos. S.R.L. 1968.

INSTITUTO DEL ABORIGEN CHAQUEÑO (IDACH). Situación de las tierras de las comunidades aborígenes. Resistencia: [unpublished report]. 1990.

INSTITUTO GEOGRÁFICO MILITAR. *Atlas de la República Argentina.* Buenos Aires: Instituto Geográfico Militar, Ejército Argentina. 1989.

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADÍSTICA Y CENSOS (INEC). *Censo Nacional Agropecuario, 1969.* Buenos Aires: INEC. 1970.

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADÍSTICA Y CENSOS (INEC). *Anuario Estadístico de la República Argentina, 1983-1986.* Buenos Aires: Impresiones Gráficas Tabaré. 1989.

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADÍSTICA Y CENSOS (INEC). *Censo Nacional Agropecuario, 1988.* Buenos Aires: INEC/Dirección de Estadística y Censos. 1991.

INSTITUTO PARAGUAYO DEL INDÍGENA (INDI). *Censo y estudio de la población indígena del Paraguay: 1981.* Asunción: INDI. 1982.

INSTITUTO PARAGUAYO DEL INDÍGENA (INDI). *Ley 904/81: Estatuto de las Comunidades Indígenas.* Asunción: INDI. 1985a.

INSTITUTO PARAGUAYO DEL INDÍGENA (INDI). *La sociedad nacional y las comunidades indígenas.* Asunción: INDI. 1985b.

INSTITUTO PARAGUAYO DEL INDÍGENA (INDI). Inmuebles adquiridos y transferidos a las colonias indígenas por el INDI. Asunción: [unpublished report]. 1990.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE. *Indigenous Peoples: Living and Working Conditions of Aboriginal Populations in Independent Countries.* Geneva: International Labour Office. 1953.

ISABELLO DE ONIS, Liliana G. Regímen laboral del Indígena chaqueño. *Todo es Historia, 18, 228*, pp. 55-65. 1986.

JAMES, Preston E. *Latin America.* New York: Odessey Press. 1942.

JOSSELIN DE JONG, Patrick Edward de. *Contact der continenten: Een bijdrage tot het begrijpen van niet-westerse samenlevingen.* Leiden: Universiteitspers. 1972.

KAMMERON-GAAIKEMA, Jolan F.P. Politieke en maatschappelijke consequenties van Christelijk geloven: Doopsgezinden. Amsterdam: [unpublished]. 1975.

KARSTEN, Rafael. *Indian Tribes of the Argentine and Bolivian Gran Chaco.* Helsingfors: Akademische Buchhandlung. 1932.

KATZMAN, Martin T. The Brazilian Frontier in Comparative Perspective. *Comparative Studies in Society and History, 17, 3*, pp. 266-285. 1975.

KAY, Cristóbal. *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment.* Londen and New York: Roputledge. 1989.

KEMPSKI, Karl E. *Die Landwirtschaft im paraguayischen Chaco.* Buenos Aires: Mercur. 1931.

KLASSEN, Peter P. *Die Mennoniten in Paraguay: Reich Gottes und Reich dieser Welt.* Bolanden-Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein. 1988.

KLASSEN, Peter P. *Die Mennoniten in Paraguay. Band 2: Begegnung mit Indianern und Paraguayern*. Bolanden-Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein. 1991.

KLEINPENNING, Johan M.G. *The Integration and Colonisation of the Paraguayan Chaco* [Nijmeegse Geografische Cahiers, No. 24]. Nijmegen: Geografisch en Planologisch Instituut. 1984a.

KLEINPENNING, Johan M.G. *Paraguay* [Landendocumentatie 1984, No. 5]. Amsterdam: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen. 1984b.

KLEINPENNING, Johan M.G. *Man and Land in Paraguay* [Latin American Studies, No. 41]. Amsterdam: Centro de Estudios y Documentación Latinoamericanos. 1987.

KLEINPENNING, Jan M.G. Introduction. In: J.M.G. Kleinpenning (ed.) *The Incorporative Drive: Examples from Latin America*. Saarbrücken: Verlag Breitenbach Publishers, pp. 1-22. 1991.

KLEINPENNING, Johan M.G. *Rural Paraguay: 1870-1932*. Amsterdam: Centro de Estudios y Documentación Latinoamericanos. 1992.

KLEINPENNING, Johan M.G. and Elisabeth B. ZOOMERS. Mensch und Umwelt in Paraguay. In: G. Kohlhepp and A. Schrader (eds.) *Ökologische Probleme in Lateinamerika*. Tübingen: Tübinger Geographische Studien, No. 96, pp. 213-223. 1987.

KLOOS, Peter. *Het indianenprobleem van Zuid-Amerika* [Terreinverkenningen in de Antropologie]. Assen: Van Gorcum en Comp. B.V. 1974.

KRAUSE, Annemarie Elisabeth. *Mennonite Settlement in the Paraguayan Chaco* [University of Chigago, Department of Geography, Research Papers, No. 25]. Chigago, Illinois: Department of Geography. 1952.

LABOUGLE, Raul de. Las reducciones del Chaco. *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina, 11, 18-19*, pp. 101-126. 1969.

LA HERENCIA. *Programa y presupuesto - 1990*. Asunción: Iglesia Anglicana Paraguaya. 1990.

LATTIMORE, Owen. *Studies in Frontier History, Collected Papers 1928-1958*. Paris/La Hay: Mouton & Co. 1962.

LATTES, Alfredo E. *Aspectos demográficos del proceso de redistribución espacial de la población en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: CENEP. 1980.

LATTES, Alfredo E. and Enrique OTEIZA. *Dinámica migratoria Argentina (1955-1984). Democratización y retorno de expatriados*. Geneva: Instituto de Investigaciones de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Social. 1986.

MACHUCA, Fausto Ponciano. *Ley Aborigen: Reparación histórica de una antigua injusticia*. Salta: Ministerio del Bienestar Social de Salta. 1986.

MAGRASSI, Guillermo E. *Los Aborígenes de la Argentina. Ensayo socio-histórico-cultural* [second edition]. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Busqueda. 1989.

MANDRINI, Raul. *Argentina indígena. Los Aborígenes a la llegada de los Españoles* [Historia Testimonial Argentina, Documentos Vivos de Nuestro Pasado, No. 1]. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina. 1983.

MARÍN, Daniel. *Atlas geográfico de la República Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Nuevo Mundo S.A. 1986.

MARTINEZ-CROVETTO, Raul. *Estado actual de las tribus Mocovies del Chaco* [Etnobiológica, No. 7]. Corrientes; Universidad Nacional del Nordeste, Facultad de Agronomía y Veterinaria. 1968.

MAYBURY-LEWIS, David. Demystifying the Second Conquest. In: M. Schmink and C.H. Wood (eds.) *Frontier Expansion in Amazonia*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press. pp. 127-134. 1984.

MAYBURY-LEWIS, David and James HOWE. *The Indian People of Paraguay: Their Plights and their Prospects*. Petersborough-New Hampshire: Cultural Survival. 1980.

MCGANN, Thomas F. *Argentina, the Divided Land*. Princeton: Van Nostrand/Reinhold. 1966.

MÉTRAUX, Alfred. Ethnography of the Gran Chaco. In: J. Steward (ed.) *Handbook of South American Indians* [vol. 1]. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, pp. 197-370. 1946.

MIKESELL, Marvin W. Comparative Studies in Frontier History. In: R. Hofstadter and S.M. Lipset (eds.) *Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier*. New York/Londen: Basic Books. 1968.

MILLER, Elmer S. *Los Tobas Argentinos. Armonía y disonancia en una sociedad*. Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores. 1979.

MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA Y GANADERÍA (MAG). *Diagnóstico de la ganadería bovina de carne*. Asunción: MAG. 1973.

MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA Y GANADERÍA (MAG). *Encuestas agropecuarias 1982-1985*. Asunción: MAG. 1986.

MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA Y GANADERÍA (MAG). *Encuestas agropecuarias 1986-1987*. Asunción: MAG. 1988.

MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA Y GANADERÍA (MAG). *Estimación de la producción agropecuaria, 1988-1989*. Asunción: MAG. 1990.

MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA Y GANADERÍA (MAG). *Censo Agropecuario Nacional 1991*. Asunción: Dirección de Censo y Estadística Agropecuario. 1992.

MINISTERIO DE BIENESTAR SOCIAL. *Censo Aborigen Provincial*. Salta: Gobierno Provincia de Salta, Ministerio de Bienestar Social. 1984.

MOODY, Roger (ed.) *The Indigenous Voice: Visions and Realities, Vol. 1*. International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. Londen/New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd. 1988.

NEDDERMAN, Ursula Irene. *Evolución de la actividad ganadera en el Chaco entre 1900 y 1952* [Cuadernos de Geohistoria Regional, No. 20]. Resistencia: Conicet. 1987.

NELSON, Michael. Land Settlement in the Humid Tropics: Lessons from Experience in Latin America. In: *Spontaneous Settlement Formation in Rural Regions*, Vol 2, Case studies. Nairobi, pp. 100-120. 1986.

NOSTITZ, S. Von. *De moord op Winnetou C.S.: De uitroeing van de Roodhuiden in Amerika*. Baarn: Uitgeverij In den Toren. 1970.

OSUNA, Lilia Juanita. *El Chaco y su población (1895-1970)* [Folia Histórica del Nordeste, No. 2]. pp. 103-125. Resistencia. 1976.

PALMER, John H. An Ethnographic Survey of the Mataco Hunters: Fishers and Gatherers of the Northern Argentine Chaco. Oxford: [unpublished M.A. thesis]. 1977.

PARTRIDGE, William L. The Human Ecology of Tropical Land Settlement in Latin America: Overview. In: D.A. Schumann and W.L. Partridge (eds.) *The Human Ecology of Tropical Land Settlement in Latin America*. Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 3-19. 1989.

PELLESCHI, Dolores Mercedes Carzon de and Enrique Eugenio Juan PELLESCHI. *Geopolítica, comunidades aborígenes de la Provincia de Salta*. Salta: Instituto Superior de Lenguas vivas en Salta. 1990.

PENDLE, George. *Paraguay, a Riverside Nation*. Londen: Royal Institute of International Affairs. 1954.

PERASSO, José A. *Crónicas de cacerías humanas. La tragedia Ayoreo*. Asunción: El Lector.

PINCUS, Joseph. *The Economy of Paraguay*. New York/Washington/Londen: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers. 1968.

PLETT, Rudolf. *Presencia Menonita en el Paraguay. Origen, doctrina, estructura y funcionamiento*. Asunción: Instituto Bíblico. 1979.

PODER EJECUTIVO DE LA PROVINCIA DEL CHACO. *Ley 3258: Ley de las Comunidades Indígenas*. Resistencia. 1987.

PODER LEGISLATIVO DE LA PROVINCIA DE FORMOSA. *Ley 426: Ley integral del Aborigen*. Formosa. 1984.

PODER LEGISLATIVO DE LA PROVINCIA DE FORMOSA. *Resolución No. 304. Reglamentación de la Ley No. 426, Ley Integral del Aborigen*. Formosa. 1985.

POLLOCK, Norman. Contacts between Settlers and Native Peoples. In: A. Lemon and N. Pollock (eds.) *Studies in Overseas Settlement and Population*. Londen, pp. 81-101. 1980.

PORTAS, Julio Aníbal. *Malón contra malón. La solución final del problema del Indio en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor. 1967.

PRIEN, Hans Jürgen. *Die Geschichte des Christentums in Lateinamerika*. Göttingen: Van den Hoeck en Ruprecht. 1978.

PRIETO, Esther. *El derecho consuetudinario indígena en la legislación paraguaya. Visión general en el Siglo XX*. Asunción: Centro de Estudios Humanitarios. 1989.

PRIETO, Esther and Guillermo ROLÓN DEL PUERTO. *Estudio legislación indígena, legislación ambiental. Viabilidad para una articulación armónica de la normativa indígena y la normativa ambiental desde la perspectiva del reconocimiento del derecho histórico de las comunidades indígenas sobre sus territorios tradicionales*. Asunción: Banco Mundial/Ministerio de Agricultura/Centro de Estudios Humanitarios. 1991.

PUPARELLI, Ana. Dos grupos Matacos del Chaco Salteño. *Suplemento Antropológico, 4, 2*, pp. 227-241. 1969.

RADIN, Paul. *Indians of South America*. New york: Greenwood Press. 1942.

RAMOS, Alcida R. Frontier Expansion and Indian Peoples in the Brazilian Amazon. In: M. Schmink and C.H. Wood (eds.) *Frontier Expansion in Amazonia*. Gainesville, pp. 105-126. 1984.

KANDLE, Patricio H. *Atlas del desarrollo territorial de la Argentina.* Buenos Aires: OIKOS. 1981a.

KANDLE, Patricio H. *Atlas del desarrollo territorial de la Argentina. Serie de estadísticas históricas.* Buenos Aires: OIKOS. 1981b.

KEDEKOP, Calvin. Mission in the Paraguayan Chaco. *International Review of Mission, 62, 247,* pp. 302-317. 1973.

KEDEKOP, Calvin. *Strangers become Neighbours: Mennonite and Indigenous Relations in the Paraguayan Chaco* [Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History, No. 22]. Scottdale (Ontario): Herald Press. 1980.

KEGEHR, Walter. *Die lebensräumliche Situation der Indianer im paraguayischen Chaco* [Bastler Beiträge zur Geographie, Heft 25]. Basel. 1979.

KEGEHR, Walter. La situación socio-económica de los Nivaclé de Loma Pytá y el terreno ofertado por el Sr. Timoteo Martínez. Asunción: Equipo Nacional de Misiones [unpublished report]. 1985.

KENSHAW, John. Property, Resources and Equality among the Indians of the Paraguayan Chaco. *Man, 23, 2,* pp. 334-352. 1988.

ROBINS, Wayne. Proyectos de desarrollo y comunidades indígenas. *Suplemento Antropológico, 19, 1,* pp. 71-80. 1984.

RODRÍGUEZ, Nemesio J. *Oppression in Argentina: The Mataco Case* [IWGIA documents, No. 21]. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. 1975.

ROMERO, Luis Alberto. El ciclo del tanino en Argentina. *Revista Paraguaya de Sociología, 14, 38,* pp. 157-180. 1977.

RUSSO, Ramirez M. *El Chaco Paraguayo. Integración socio-cultural de los Mennonitas a la sociedad nacional.* Asunción: El Foro. 1983.

RUTTEN, Marcel M.E.M. *Selling Wealth to buy Poverty: The Process of the Individualization of Landownership among the Maasai Pastoralists of Kajiado District, Kenya, 1890-1990.* Saarbrücken: Verlag Breitenbach Publishers. 1992.

SAIZAR, Mercedes. *Los pueblos aborígenes y sus derechos en Argentina* [Cuadernos de ENDEPA, No. 2]. Formosa: Equipo Nacional de Pastoral Aborigen. 1989.

SANTAMARÍA, Daniel J. Migración laboral y conflicto interétnico. El caso de las migrantes indígenas temporarios a los ingenios azucareros saltojujeños. *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos, 1, 3,* pp. 357-379. 1986.

SASSONE, Susana María. Movimiento de extranjeros en la frontera Argentina. Efectos del tránsito vecinal. *Revista Geográfica, 108,* pp. 19-51. 1988.

SAWYER, Donald R. Frontier Expansion and Retraction in Brazil. In: M. Schmink and C.H. Wood (eds.) *Frontier Expansion in Amazonia.* Gainesville: University of Florida Press, pp. 180-203. 1984.

SCOBIE, James R. *Argentina: A City and a Nation.* New York: Oxford University Press. 1964.

SECRETARÍA DE PLANEAMIENTO Y DESARROLLO (SEPLADE). *Diagnóstico provincial de Formosa 1980.* Resistencia: Imprenta Región. 1982.

SECRETARÍA TÉCNICA DE PLANIFICACIÓN. *Perfil Ambiental.* Asunción: STP/IIDMA/AEDI. 1985.

SEELWISCHE, José. Los valores culturales de un pueblo y sus proyectos de desarrollo. *Suplemento Antropológico, 19, 1*, pp. 57-64. 1984.

SERBÍN, Andrés. El movimiento indígena. *América Indígena, 41, 3*, pp. 407-434. 1981.

SERVICE, Elman R. *The Hunters*. Londen: Foundation of Modern Anthropological Series. 1979.

SERVICIOS PROFESIONALES SOCIO-ANTROPOLÓGICOS Y JURÍDICOS (SPSAJ). *Nuevos critérios de acción*. Asunción: SPSAJ. 1989.

SIFFREDI, Alejandra. Interacción y cognición. El caso Nivaklé. *América Indígena, 69, 3*, pp. 509-543. 1989.

SILVA, Mercedes and Luis de la CRUZ. *Memorias del Gran Chaco, No. 1, Qué Busca esta Gente?* Reconquista: Talleres del Instituto de Cultura Popular. 1991.

SOSA, Horacio C. El desarrollo del Chaco Paraguayo. *Estudios Paraguayos, 8, 1*, pp. 143-260. 1980.

STAHL, Wilmar. Cinco establecimientos agrícolas indígenas en el Chaco Paraguayo. *Suplemento Antropológico, 9, 1-2*, pp. 111-144. 1974.

STAHL, Wilmar. *Escenario indígena chaqueño. Pasado y presente*. Filadelfia: ASCIM. 1982.

STAHL, Wilmar. Antropología de la acción entre Indígenas chaqueños. Una evaluación. In: *Informe del Consejo Directivo del Instituto Paraguayo del Indígena sobre la Participación del Instituto en el Proceso Constituyente*. Asunción: Editorial Litocolor, pp. 14-19. 1992.

STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT. *Länderbericht Argentinien*. Stuttgart: Metzler-Poeschel. 1988.

STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT. *Länderbericht Paraguay*. Stuttgart: Metzler-Poeschel. 1989.

STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT. *Länderbericht Argentinien*. Stuttgart: Metzler-Poeschel. 1992.

STUNNENBERG, Peter W. La tierra de todos es la tierra de nadie. Sedentarisatie van de Chaco Indianen in Paraguay. Nijmegen: [unpublished M.A. thesis]. 1987.

STUNNENBERG, Peter W. Sedentarización de los indígenas del Chaco Paraguayo. *Suplemento Antropológico, 26, 1*, pp. 23-42. 1991a.

STUNNENBERG, Peter W. Land Legislation for Indigenous People: The Example of the Gran Chaco. In: J.M.G. Kleinpenning (ed.) *The Incorporative Drive: Examples from Latin America*. Saarbrücken: Verlag Breitenbach Publishers, pp. 119-132. 1991b.

STUNNENBERG, Peter W. Inheemse volken en hun land. *Nieuwe Geografenkrant, 16, 8*, pp. 4-6, 1991c.

STUNNENBERG, Peter W. Economic Diversification among the Indian Peoples of the Gran Chaco: Fate or Development Strategy. In: H. de Jonge and W. Wolters (eds.) *Commercialization and Market Formation in Developing Societies*. Saarbrücken: Verlag Breitenbach Publishers, pp. 48-64. 1993

STUNNENBERG, Peter W. and Frans M.C. van BUUL. Government Policy, Colonization and Indigenous People in Latin America. (forthcoming).

STUNNENBERG, Peter W. and Jan M.G. KLEINPENNING. The Role of Extractive Industries in the Process of Colonization: The Case of Quebracho Exploitation in the Gran Chaco. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie 34, 3.* 1993.

SUSNIK, Branislava. *Los Aborígenes del Paraguay [Tomo 3/1]. Etnohistoria de los Chaqueños, 1650 - 1910.* Asunción: Museo Etnográfico Andrés Barbero. 1981.

TATA, Robert J. Population Geography of Argentina. *Revista Geográfica, 85,* pp. 79-97. 1977.

TOLEDO, Carlos J. Saravia. *Estudio de tierras fiscales rurales de la Provincia de Salta.* Salta: Secretario de Estado de la Producción. 1972.

TOMASINI, Alfredo. Contribución para una historia de los Mocoví del Chaco Austral. *Suplemento Antropológico, 22, 1,* pp. 29-47. 1987.

UBERTALLI, Jorge Luis. *Guaycurú, tierra rebelde. Tres sublevaciones indígenas.* Buenos Aires: Editorial Antarca S.R.L. 1987.

UQUILLAS, Jorge E. Land Grants for Indigenous Communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon. In: J. Hemming (ed.) *Change in the Amazon Basin, Vol. 2, The Frontier after a Decade of Colonization.* Londen, pp. 200-206. 1985.

VÁZQUEZ, Mirna L. Historia de la legislación indigenista paraguaya. *Suplemento Antroplógico, 16, 2,* pp. 93-103. 1981.

VELOZO DE ESPINOZA, Elsa Aurora. *El oeste formoseño. Su red de asentamientos humanos.* Formosa: Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, Secretaria de Planeamiento y Desarrollo. 1986.

VOLBEDA, Sjoukje. *Pioniersstedeu in het oerwoud. Stedelijke ontwikkelingen aan een agrarisch kolonisatiefront in het Braziliaanse Amazonegebied* [Nijmeegse Geografische Cahiers, No. 26]. Nijmegen: Geografisch en Planologisch Instituut. 1984.

WALLIS, Cristóbal. Cuatro proyectos del Chaco. Zeist: Comisión Intereclesiástica de Coordinación para Proyectos de Desarrollo (ICCO) [unpublished report]. 1985.

WEINSTEIN, Barbara. *The Amazon Rubberboom, 1850-1929.* California: Stanford University Press. 1983.

WHITEFORD, Scott and Richard ADAMS. *Migration, Ethnicity and Adaption: Bolivian Migrant Workers in Northwest Argentina* [Institute of Latin American Studies, No. 186]. Texas, Austin: Offprint service. 1975.

WILHELMY, Herbert and Willy ROHMEDER. *Die La Plata Länder, Argentinien, Paraguay und Uruguay.* Braunschweig: Georg Westerman Verlag. 1963.

WOOD, Charles H. Peasant and Capitalist Production in the Brazilian Amazon: A Conceptual Framework for the Study of Frontier Expansion. In: E.F. Moran (ed.) *The Dilemma of Amazonian Development.* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 259-279. 1983.

WRIGHT, Pablo. Presência protestante entre aborígenes del Chaco Argentino. *Scripta Ethnológica, 7,* pp. 73-84. 1983.

WRIGHT, Pablo. *Aproximación a la cosmovisión Toba* [Cuadernos de la Iglesia y Sociedad, No. 7]. Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios Cristianos. 1988.

Newspapers and Magazines

ABC COLOR (Paraguayan national newspaper). Asunción.
ACCIÓN DE INCUPO (Instituto de Cultura Popular)(monthly newspaper for Northern Argentina). Reconquista.
CHACO BOREAL, BOLETÍN INDÍGENA (Centro de Estudios Humanitários/La Herencia). Asunción.
DIÁLOGO MISIONERO INDÍGENA (DIM). (Servicios de Informaciones del Equipo Nacional de Misiones, Conferencia Episcopal Paraguaya). Asunción.
EL DIARIO (Paraguayan national newspaper). Asunción.
EL TERRITORIO (Argentine regional newspaper). Resistencia.
HOY (Paraguayan national newspaper). Asunción.
LA MAÑANA (Argentine regional newspaper). Formosa.
LA PATRIA (Paraguayan national newspaper). Asunción.
MENNOBLATT (Zeitschrift für Gemeinde und Kolonie: Asociación de Servicios de Cooperación Indígena Mennonita (ASCIM). Filadelfia (Paraguay).
NORTE (Argentine regional newspaper). Resistencia.
NUEVO DIARIO (Argentine regional newspaper). Formosa.
SOUTHERN CONE REPORT (Latin American Newsletters Ltd.). London.
ÚLTIMA HORA (Paraguayan national newspaper). Asunción.

GLOSSARY

Aborigen - indigenous, Indian
Administrador - administrator
Agrícola - agricultural
Aldea - village
Área baja - low area, depression in the landscape
Artesanía - handiwork
Asociación comunitaria - community association, co-operative
Asunto - affair
Bañado - flooded land
Bandeirante - (Portuguese for) Indian slaver, explorer
Barrio - neighbourhood
Básico - fundamental
Behörde - (German for) bureau
Cachapé - ox cart
Cacique - leader
Campaña del Desierto - campaign of the desert
Campo demostrador - experimental ranch or farm
Capacitación - training
Caudillo - leader
Centro - centre
Chaco Bajo - lower Chaco (eastern part)
Chacra - field, farm, garden
Changa - incidental work
Ciclo - course
Colonia - colony, settlement
Comisión vecinal - neighbourhood commission
Compañía - company
Campo - countryside
Comunidad - community
Conquista espiritual - spiritual conquest
Cooperativa - co-operative
Criollo - descendent of old Spanish population
Cuadra - block
Decreto - decree
Derecho consuetudinario - common law
Desarrollo - development
Dirección de catastro - land registration office
Escuela - school
Estancia - cattle farm, ranch
Estanciero - cattle farmer, rancher
Estatuto - statute
Formación - training, education
Gaucho - cowboy of mixed European and Indian descent
Herencia - inheritance
Hogar - homestead
Iglesia - church
Indígena - indigenous, Indian
Ingenio - sugar mill
Instituto - institution
Intervenor - interim manager
Junta - council
Latifundismo - large landholdership
Ley - act, law
Lote - plot, lot
Manzana - block
Mestizo - person of mixed European and Indian descent
Minifundismo - small landholdership
Misión - mission
Monte - forest in dry regions dominated by scrub
Nuevo - new
Nunca más - never again
Obraje - lumber camp
Obrero - labourer
Paí - (Guaraní for) priest
Patrón - employer, chief

Personería jurídica - legal recognition of a person or group of persons
Puerto - port
Puesto criollo - small creole settlement
Reducción - enforced Indian settlement
Reserva aborigen - Indian reservation
Salina - salt lake
Siedlung - (German for) settlement
Socio - member, associate
Tajamar - depression dug to store rainwater
Tierra - land
Tierra fiscal - public land
Título de la tierra - title of land
Unida - united
Villas misérias - urban slums
Wirtschaftsberater (German for) economic advisor
Zafra - (sugar) harvest

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIP	Asociación Indigenista del Paraguay
AIRA	Asociación Indigenista de la República Argentina
API	Asociación de Parcialidades Indígenas
ARP	Asociación Rural del Paraguay
ASCIM	Asociación de Servicios de Cooperación Indígena Mennonita
DAI	Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas
DNAI	Dirección Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas
ENDEPA	Equipo Nacional de Pastoral Aborigen
ENM	Equipo Nacional de Misiones
IBR	Instituto de Bienestar Rural
IC	Initiativa Cristiana
ICA	Instituto de Comunidades Aborígenes
IDACH	Instituto del Aborigen Chaqueño
IEU	Iglesia Evangélica Unida
ILO	International Labour Office
IMO	International Mennonite Organization
INDI	Instituto Paraguayo del Indígena
IPA	Instituto Provincial de Aborígenes
ISB	Indianer Siedlungs Behörde
JUM	Junta Unida de Misiones
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTM	New Tribes Mission
PAN	Plan de Alimentación Nacional
SPSAJ	Servicios Profesionales Socio-Antropológicos y Jurídicos

INDEX

RECHT OP LAND
De incorporatie van de Paraguayaanse en Argentijnse Gran Chaco en de ruimtelijke marginalisering van de Indiaanse bevolking

De vraag die centraal staat in deze studie luidt: "Welke ruimtelijke en economische gevolgen heeft de incorporatie van de Paraguayaanse en Argentijnse Gran Chaco (gehad) voor de positie van de Indianen in dit gebied, en welke reacties zijn er gekomen van overheden, niet-gouvernementele organisaties en de Indianen zelf om hun verdere ruimtelijke marginalisering te voorkomen?"

Het eerste deel van het boek is gewijd aan een beschrijving van het proces van incorporatie dat aan het einde van de 19e eeuw vorm begon te krijgen in de Gran Chaco. Incorporatie wordt in deze analyse opgevat als het proces waardoor voorheen min of meer geïsoleerde gebieden of onafhankelijke bevolkingsgroepen worden opgenomen in grotere, vaak dominante constellaties of samenlevingen. Kolonisatie kan daarbij worden begrepen als een specifieke vorm van incorporatie die betrekking heeft op de openlegging van onontgonnen gebieden ten behoeve van extractieve of agrarische activiteiten die bijdragen aan de nationale economie.

De incorporatie van de Gran Chaco heeft pas relatief laat haar beslag gekregen. Tot aan de laatste decennia van de vorige eeuw werd het gebied vrijwel uitsluitend bewoond door Indianen. Het onherbergzame karakter van de Gran Chaco voor wat betreft zijn spaarzame vegetatie en klimatologische omstandigheden, hadden het gebied, dat een oppervlakte heeft van bijna twintig keer Nederland, eeuwenlang gevrijwaard van kolonisatie door blanken.

De Gran Chaco werd oorspronkelijk bewoond door 21 Indiaanse bevolkingsgroepen die zich van elkaar onderscheidden op grond van etniciteit en taal. Al deze groepen werden zonder uitzondering gerekend tot de zogenaamde jagers- en verzamelaarsvolken en leidden een bestaan dat gebaseerd was op de jacht op wild en gevogelte, de visvangst en het verzamelen van vruchten, wortels en andere eetbare zaken. Een aantal volken legde zich daarnaast ook toe op zwerflandbouw, waarbij zij op kleine schaal gewassen verbouwden die uitsluitend voor hun eigen

consumptie werden aangewend. Teneinde over voldoende economische bestaansmiddelen te kunnen beschikken, leefden de Indianen niet sedentair, maar trokken zij rond in grote, min of meer afgebakende territoria. Deze semi-nomadische leefwijze van de Indianen legde een groot beslag op de ruimte.

Grote veranderingen in de Gran Chaco namen een aanvang aan het einde van de vorige eeuw toen missionarissen en zendelingen het gebied introkken om contacten te leggen met de Indiaanse bevolking. Engelse missionarissen van de *South American Missionary Society* namen het voortouw in de evangelisatie die uiteindelijk resulteerde in de kerstening en pacificatie van veel Indiaanse groepen die zich voordien nogal vijandig hadden opgesteld ten opzichte van vreemdelingen.

Omstreeks dezelfde tijd werd ook een aanvang gemaakt met de economische exploitatie van de Gran Chaco. De bosrijke gebieden aan de oostzijde kwamen in handen van voornamelijk buitenlandse ondernemingen die op grote schaal *quebracho* bomen kapten ten behoeve van de produktie van tannine, een looistof waar indertijd veel vraag naar was. In het Argentijnse deel van de Chaco werd ook vrij snel een begin gemaakt met de produktie van katoen waarvoor de natuurlijke omstandigheden niet ongunstig bleken. In het centrale deel van de Paraguayaanse Chaco streek rond de jaren twintig een vrij omvangrijke groep Mennonieten uit Canada en Rusland neer die een drietal grote, agrarische kolonies stichtten. De meest verstrekkende invloed ging echter uit van de veehouderij die omstreeks de jaren dertig een enorme groei doormaakte in vrijwel het gehele gebied. Grote arealen land van binnen- en buitenlandse firma's werden ingezet voor de vleesproduktie.

Voor de Indiaanse bevolking betekende de incorporatie van de Gran Chaco een regelrechte aanslag op hun bestaansbasis daar de Indiaanse economie enkel functioneerde bij de gratie van de beschikbaarheid van een uitgestrekt territorium. Toen grote delen van de Gran Chaco in particuliere handen vielen en daarmee ontoegankelijk werden voor de Indianen, geraakten de meeste groepen dan ook in economische en ruimtelijke zin gemarginaliseerd. Enkele groepen bleven niet langer in de binnenlanden, maar trokken naar de steden aan de rand van de Gran Chaco in de hoop daar werk en onderdak te vinden. Anderen zochten contact met de ondernemers die zich in de Gran Chaco hadden gevestigd en voor wie zij tegen lage lonen arbeid konden verrichten. De meeste groepen bleven in hun oorspronkelijke woongebieden die echter in toenemende mate door niet-Indianen in gebruik werden genomen.

Hoofdstuk drie gaat in op het Paraguayaanse en Argentijnse overheidsbeleid ten aanzien van de Indianen in de Gran Chaco. Het blijkt dat, overigens net als in veel andere landen waar sprake is van inheemse bevolkingsgroepen, de overheden van beide landen de problematische situatie waaronder de Gran Chaco Indianen overleven, jarenlang ondergeschikt hebben gemaakt aan de economische ontwikkeling van het gebied. Verdrijving uit de kolonisatiegebieden, recrutering als onderbetaalde arbeidskrachten en het onderbrengen in vaak te kleine reservaten was het lot dat veel Indianen ten deel viel.

Omstreeks 1980 vindt er een kentering plaats in het beleid ten aanzien van de Indianen. In Paraguay en Argentinië worden een aantal wetten uitgevaardigd die de positie van de Indianen met betrekking tot de toegang tot landbezit moeten versterken. Communaal landbezit, zoals geambieerd door de Indianen, wordt bij de wet geregeld, en nieuw opgerichte instituten worden belast met de uitvoering van de wetten.

Het tweede deel van het boek behandelt een zestal *case studies* van Indiaanse gemeenschappen in de Gran Chaco. De rode draad door deze *case studies* is de mate waarin de betreffende groepen als ruimtelijk gemarginaliseerd moeten worden aangemerkt. Ruimtelijke marginalisering heeft daarbij betrekking op een viertal aspecten, te weten: rechten ten aanzien van het land, oppervlakte, kwaliteit en locatie. De *case studies* zijn geografisch verspreid over de hele Gran Chaco, omvatten alle mogelijke vormen van Indiaans landbezit en geven een representatief beeld van de ruimtelijke situatie waarin zich de Indiaanse bevolking van de Gran Chaco vandaag de dag bevindt. Achtereenvolgens komen aan de orde: (zie ook kaart 3.1)

1) De Nivaklé in Loma Pytá die leven op een particulier veebedrijf in de Paraguayaanse Chaco.
2) Een groep Wichí die zich gevestigd heeft op land dat het eigendom is van de Argentijnse provincie Salta.
3) Een omvangrijke groep Toba en Mocoví Indianen die een reservaat bewonen in de Argentijnse provincie Chaco.
4) De Lengua van Colonia Armonía, die één van de twaalf door Mennonieten begeleide Indiaanse kolonies in het centrale deel van de Paraguayaanse Chaco tot hun beschikking hebben gekregen.
5) De Toba Indianen in de Argentijnse stad Clorinda die hun landrechten in Barrio Nam Qom hebben verkregen in de vorm van individuele eigendomstitels.

6) De Chamacoco in Puerto Diana in het uiterste noorden van de Paraguayaanse Chaco die op collectieve wijze het land bezitten dat de overheid hun heeft toegewezen (zie kaart 3.1).

De studie geeft aanleiding tot de volgende conclusies:

De Indianen van West-Paraguay en Noord-Argentinië bevinden zich in een uiterst precaire economische situatie. De traditionele bestaanswijze van de Indianen die gebaseerd was op jagen en verzamelen is verstoord doordat hun voormalige jachtgebieden niet langer voor hen toegankelijk zijn. Een goed alternatief om het economisch bestaan te verzekeren is nauwelijks voorhanden, waardoor de Indianen voornamelijk afhankelijk zijn van incidentele loonarbeid en kleinschalige landbouw.

Het merendeel van de Indianen verkeert in een onzekere positie ten aanzien van het gebruik en het bezit van het land dat zij bewonen. Ondanks het feit dat sinds enkele jaren in zowel Paraguay als Argentinië Indianen wettelijk gezien recht hebben op land dat hun gratis ter beschikking moet worden gesteld, zien we dat de wetgeving op dit gebied nog maar in zeer beperkte mate effect heeft gesorteerd.

Indiaanse groepen die verblijven op land dat het eigendom is van de staat, de provincie of van particulieren lopen het risico binnen afzienbare tijd de toegang tot dit land te verliezen. Velen zullen moeten wijken voor de economische ontwikkeling die zich in het gebied voltrekt. Ook Indiaanse gemeenschappen die zich bevinden in gebieden die hun middels decreten als reservaten zijn toegewezen, lijken niet zeker van hun toekomst. In veel gevallen worden de betreffende decreten na verloop van tijd genegeerd of herzien, wat er gewoonlijk toe leidt dat de Indianen alsnog een ander heenkomen moeten zoeken.

Een beter perspectief is weggelegd voor Indianen die de gelegenheid hebben gekregen zich te vestigen op land dat niet-gouvernementele organisaties voor hen hebben aangekocht. We mogen aannemen dat deze gebieden op korte termijn geen andere bestemming zullen krijgen. Of de Indianen de betreffende gebieden ooit werkelijk in bezit zullen krijgen, is echter de vraag.

Dat er wel enkele Indiaanse groepen zijn die op basis van de recent uitgevaardigde wetgeving in staat zijn geweest land in eigendom te verwerven, blijkt uit de beschrijving van de laatste twee *case studies*. Enerzijds gaat het daarbij om groepen waarvan de individuele families landrechten hebben verworven, anderzijds om collectieve eigendomsrechten die de gemeenschap als geheel tot eigenaar maken. In beide

gevallen geldt echter, dat het verstrekken van eigendomsrechten alleen niet voldoende is. Wanneer deze rechten betrekking hebben op kleine en/of marginale gebieden, dan zijn de Indianen er feitelijk maar nauwelijks mee geholpen.

Resumerend kunnen we stellen dat de maatregelen die in de afgelopen tien jaar zijn genomen door de Paraguayaanse en Argentijnse overheden om de Indiaanse rechten op grondgebied in de Gran Chaco te herstellen, in principe aanleiding gaven tot optimisme. Nu echter blijkt dat de maatregelen niet direct leiden tot een positieverbetering voor de Indianen, wordt het optimisme danig afgezwakt. Het vastleggen van rechten in wetten en decreten heeft alleen dan zin wanneer de betreffende wetten en decreten ook daadwerkelijk worden nageleefd. Gebeurt dat niet, dan wekt het toch de indruk dat overheden enkel de suggestie willen wekken een constructief beleid te voeren ten aanzien van hun burgers zonder daarvan echter de consequenties te willen aanvaarden.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Peter Stunnenberg was born in Nijmegen, the Netherlands on April 9th, 1963. In 1982, he started studying Human Geography at the Catholic University of Nijmegen and he specialized in Human Geography of Developing Areas. For his M.A. thesis, he conducted a study in the Paraguayan Chaco of the settlement projects run by Mennonite and Anglican NGOs among the Indian population. He received his Master's degree in 1987. From February 1988 to July 1989, he worked for *S.O.S. Wereldhandel*, a Dutch organization that aims to promote fair trade with developing countries. In October 1989, he joined the Department of Human Geography of Developing Areas at the Catholic University of Nijmegen as a junior researcher. He has since done the research for his PhD thesis and has had several articles published about the Indian people of the Gran Chaco and about indigenous people in general.

Nijmegen Studies in Development and Cultural Change

1 Peperkamp, G.; Remie, C.H.W., (ed.): The Struggle for Land World-wide. 1989. X, 183 p. ISBN 3-88156-430-6.

2 Vleugels, René Marie Paul: Industrialization and Secondary Cities in Central Mexico. 1990. XIV, 293 p. ISBN 3-88156-465-9.

3 Burgler, R.A.: The eyes of the pineapple revolutionary intellectuals and terror in democratic Kampuchea. 1990. VIII, 428 p. ISBN 3-88156-468-3.

4 Kersten, Johanna Wilhelmina: Policies for Rural Peripheral Regions in the European Community. 1990. XIII, 321 p. ISBN 3-88156-471-3.

5 Hebinck, Paulus Gerardus Maria: The Agrarian Structure in Kenya: State, Farmers and Commodity Relations. 1990. XIII, 310 p. ISBN 3-88156-490-X.

6 Droogers, André; Huizer, Gerrit; Siebers, Hans (eds.). Popular Power in Latin American Religions. 1991. IV, 314 p. ISBN 3-88156-502-7.

7 Krosenbrink-Gelissen, Lilianne Ernestine: Sexual Equality as an Aboriginal Right. The Native Women's Association of Canada and the Constitutional Process on Aboriginal Matters, 1982–1987. 1991. XII, 265 p. ISBN 3-88156-522-1.

8 Kleinpenning, J.M.G. (ed.). The Incorporative Drive. Examples from Latin America. 1991. VIII, 293 p. ISBN 3-88156-533-7.

9 Huang, Weixin: Economic Integration as a Development Device. The case of the EC and China. 1992. XIV, 183 p. ISBN 3-88156-539-6.

10 Rutten, M.M.E.M. Selling Wealth to Buy Poverty The Process of the Individualization of Landownership Among the Maasai Pastoralists of Kajiado District, Kenya, 1890-1990. 1992. XIV, 504 p. ISBN 3-88156-562-0.

11 Schuurman, Frans J.; Heer, Ellen Social Movements and NGOs in Latin America. A case-study of the womens's movement in Chile. 1992. VI, 149 p. ISBN 3-88156-568-X.

12 Ros-Tonen, Mirjam Amaranta Fiametta: Tropical Hardwood from the Brazilian Amazon. A Study of the Timber Industry in Western Para. 1993. XVII, 280 p. ISBN 3-88156-577-9.

13 Dnessen, Henk (ed.): The Politics of Ethnographic Reading and Writing. Confrontations of Western and Indigenous Views. 1993. VII, 183 p ISBN 3-88156-582-5.

14 Jonge, Huub de; Wolters, Willem (eds.): Commercialization and Market Formation in Developing Societies. 1993. VIII, 260 p. ISBN 3-88156-588-4.

Verlag **breitenbach** Publishers
Memeler Str. 50, D-6600 Saarbrücken, Germany
P.O.B. 16243, Fort Lauderdale/ Plantation
Fla. 33305, USA

Nijmegen Studies in Development and Cultural Change

15 Stunnenberg, Peter W.: Entitled to Land: The Incorporation of the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco and the Spatial Marginalization of the Indian People. 1993. XI, 277 p. ISBN 3-88156-595-7.

Verlag **breitenbach** Publishers
Memeler Str. 50, D-66121 Saarbrücken, Germany
P.O.B. 16243, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. 33305, USA

Stellingen behorende bij het proefschrift:

ENTITLED TO LAND:
The Incorporation of the Paraguayan and Argentinean Gran Chaco and the Spatial Marginalization of the Indian People

Nijmegen, 7 september 1993, 15.30 uur precies
Peter W. Stunnenberg

I

Ruimtegebrek is, zeker in de Gran Chaco, net als armoede, eerder een verdelingsprobleem dan een schaarsteprobleem.

II

Tien jaar na de uitvaardiging van een in essentie goede wetgeving ten aanzien van de Indiaanse bevolking in de Paraguayaanse en Argentijnse Chaco is het lc van deze mensen nog nauwelijks verbeterd, hetgeen aanleiding geeft tot een kritische evaluatie van de betekenis van wetgeving in deze landen.

III

Het werk van religieus geïnspireerde mensen onder de Indianen in de Gran Chaco mag niet langer worden geassocieerd met de vaak twijfelachtige reputati die het Christendom in Latijns Amerika verwierf ten tijde van de koloniale overheersing van het continent, maar moet daarentegen op hoge waarde wordet geschat.

IV

Onderzoekers die zich bezighouden met het afnemen van interviews onder de Indiaanse bevolking van de Gran Chaco dienen er rekening mee te houden dat deze respondenten niet altijd een duidelijk onderscheid maken tussen hetgeen men zich wenst en hetgeen men werkelijk heeft verworven, waargenomen of ervaren, en dat het gezegde: "De wens is de vader van de gedachte" op hen zee zeker van toepassing is.

V

De Nederlandse regering zou er goed aan doen ILO conventie 169, *Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*, op korte termijn te ratificeren.

International Legal Materials 28, 4, pp. 1382-92, 1989.

VI

Het boek: *Indigenous Peoples: A Fieldguide for Development*, is een *must* voor eenieder die, op wat voor wijze dan ook, betrokken is bij studie van of hulpverlening aan inheemse bevolkingsgroepen.

J. Beauclerk, J. Narby en J. Townsend. *Indigenous Peoples: A Fieldguide for Development*. Oxford: Oxfam. 1988.

VII

Ondanks het feit dat steeds vaker gepleit wordt voor interdisciplinair onderzoek, wordt onderzoekers die trachten te werken vanuit interdisciplinaire invalshoeken nog vaak aangeraden zich bij hun disciplinaire leest te houden.

VIII

Het feit dat individuen afkomstig uit een culturele of etnische minderheid in staat zijn maatschappelijk respectabele posities te verwervenin de hen omringende, dominante cultuur en samenleving heeft eerder een negatief dan een positief effect op de succesvolle integratie van de minderheid als geheel.

IX

Het algemene beeld dat leeft ten aanzien van de Gran Chaco als zijnde een droog, warm, stoffig, bijna onherbergzaam gebied, is correct.

X

Dat reizen in de Gran Chaco geen sinecure is blijkt wel uit de woorden van Old Shatterhand: "We moeten er rekening mee houden dat we ieder ogenblik Tobas kunnen ontmoeten en als we hun niet duidelijk kunnen maken dat wij als vrienden komen, is het niet onmogelijk dat zij hun blaaspijpen op ons richten".

K. May. *De koningin van de Gran Chaco* [Karl May pockets voor vader en zoon 15] Utrecht/Antwerpen: Spectrum, p. 109. 1962.

This book is about two major topics: the incorporation of the Gran Chaco into Paraguayan and Argentinean society and economy, and the spatial marginalization of the Indian population of this region. The research underlying this book has been conducted from a geographical perspective. The first part of the book focuses on the incorporation of the Gran Chaco and subsequently deals with colonial history, timber and quebracho extraction, cattle ranching, crop farming, missionary activities, military influence and government policy. Extensive elaboration on the process of incorporation of the Gran Chaco serves to explain the difficult position in which most Indian communities of the region find themselves today. Using six case studies of Indian communities, the author discusses the major problems presently confronting the Indian people of the Gran Chaco. The author concludes that, having little or no access to landownership or having access to only small areas of minor quality, the vast majority of the Indian communities in the Gran Chaco can be characterized as spatially marginalized.

The 'Nijmeegs Instituut voor Comparatieve Cultuur- en Ontwikkelings-studies' (NICCOS - Nijmegen Institute for Comparative Studies in Development and Cultural Change) of the Catholic University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, was established in 1989 in order to co-ordinate and stimulate the research in the Third World and in peripheral regions of the industrialized countries carried out by the Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology, the Department of Geography of Developing Areas, the Third World Centre, the Centre for Women's Studies, the Missiology Department and the Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures.